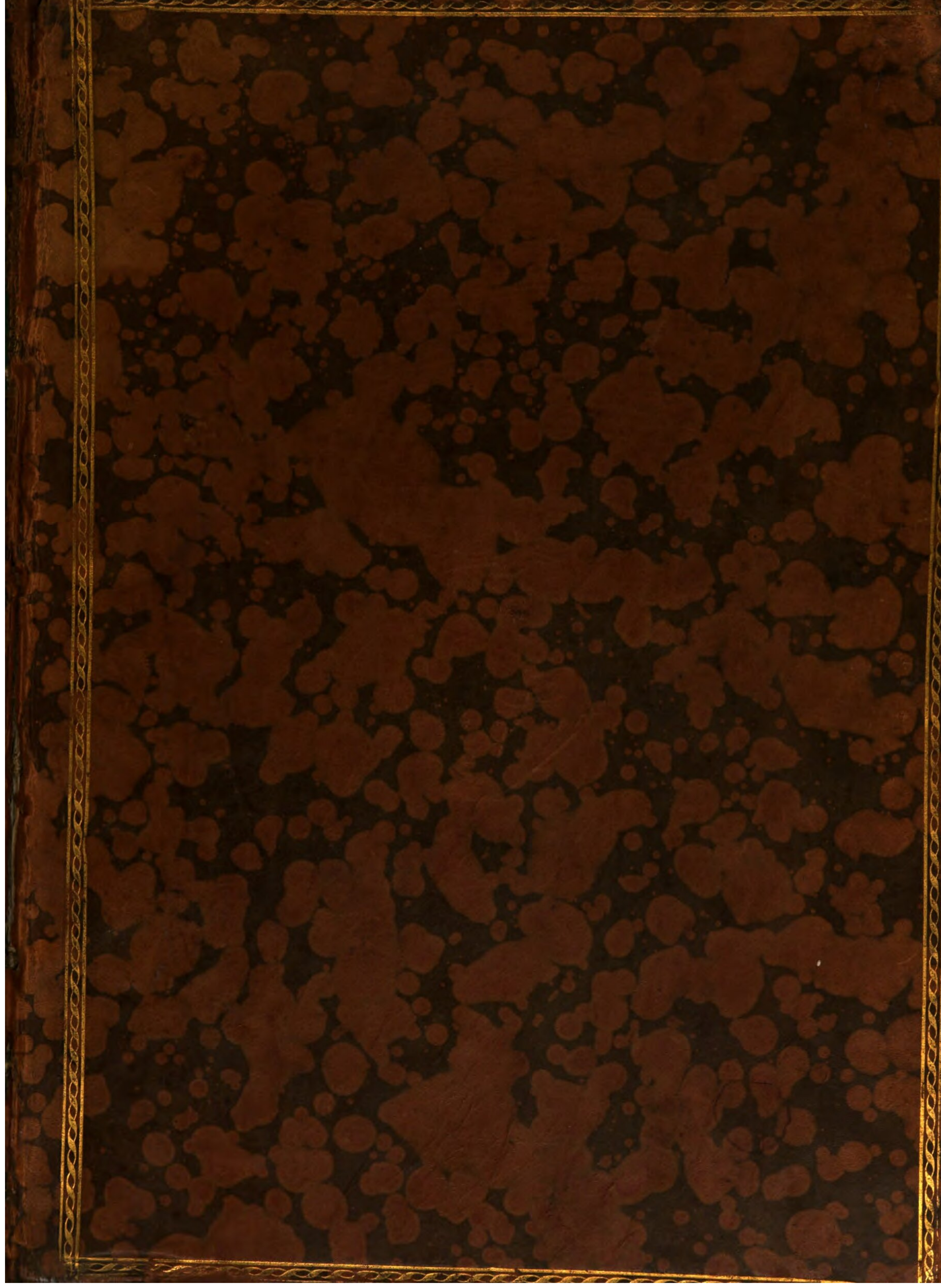
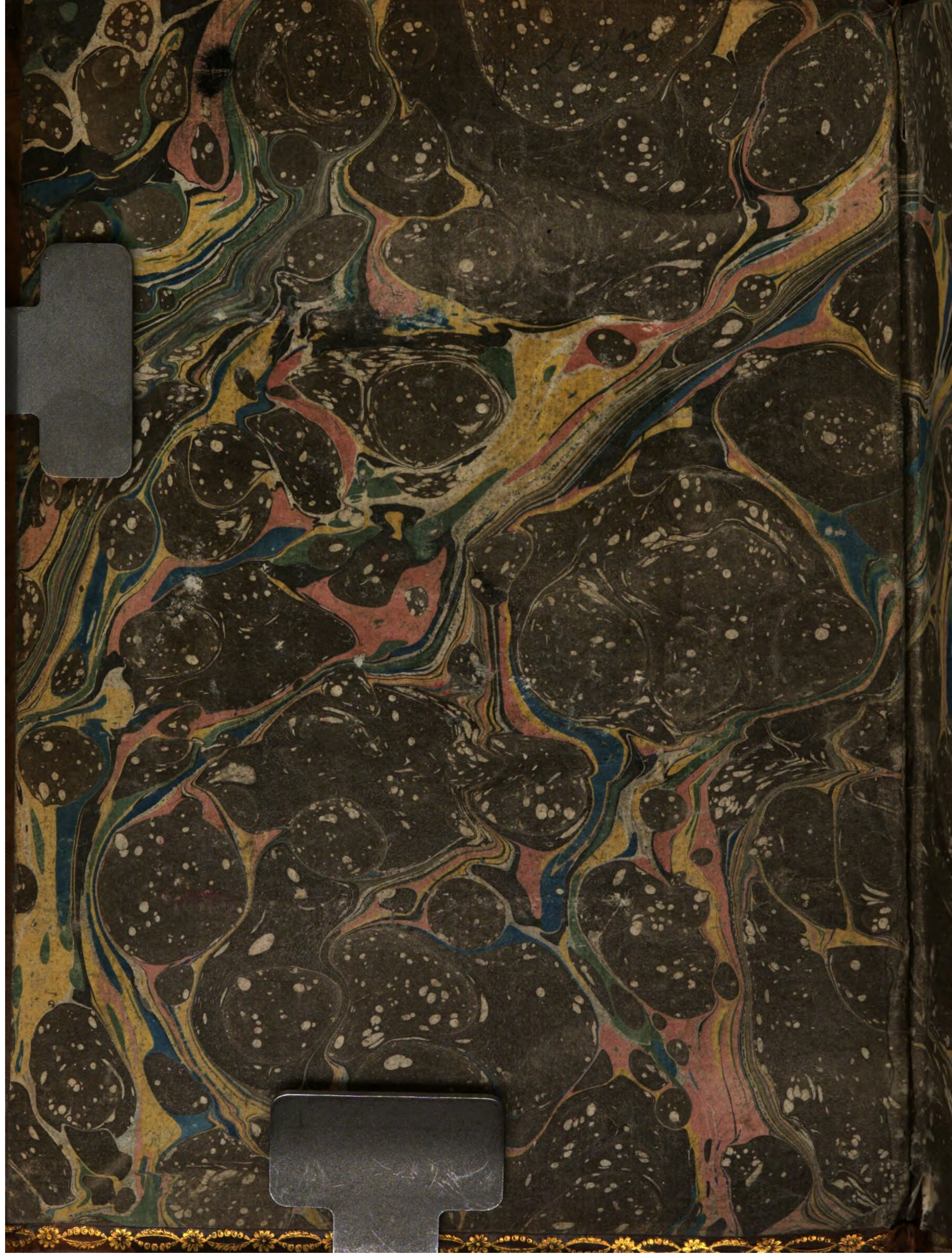






<36602425980019



<36602425980019

Bayer. Staatsbibliothek

F

4° It. sing. 262 mm

PICTURESQUE TOUR

THROUGH PART OF

EUROPE, ASIA,

AND

AFRICA.

07/93/399

PICTURESQUE TOUR

THROUGH PART OF

EUROPE, ASIA,

AND

AFRICA.

(Bisani; Alex.)

Stonhill III,
2105

A

PICTURESQUE TOUR

THROUGH PART OF

EUROPE, ASIA, and AFRICA:

CONTAINING

MANY NEW REMARKS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE OF SOCIETY,
REMAINS OF ANCIENT EDIFICES, &c.

WITH PLATES,

AFTER DESIGNS

By JAMES STUART, Esq. F. R. S. AND F. A. S.

AND AUTHOR OF THE ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS.

WRITTEN BY AN ITALIAN GENTLEMAN.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. DAVIS;

FOR R. FAULDER, NEW BOND-STREET.

1793.

PICTURESQUE TOUR

THROUGH PART OF

EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA:

CONTAINING

MANY NEW REMARKS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE OF SOCIETY,

REMAINS OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS, &c.

WITH PLATES,

AFTER DESIGNING

BY JAMES STUART, ESQ. F.R.S. AND F.A.S.

AND AUTHOR OF THE ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS.

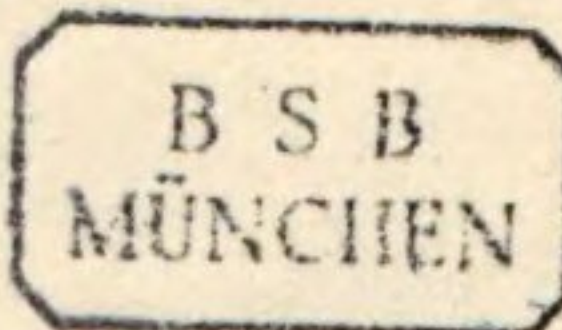
WRITTEN BY AN ITALIAN GENTILMAN.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. DAVIES;

FOR R. FLEISHER, NEW BOND-STREET.

1793.



T A B L E

O F

C O N T E N T S.

L E T T E R I.

FROM Palermo.—Idea that of city.—Description of the
Flora.—Charnel-house of the capuchins. Page 1

L E T T E R II.

From Palermo.—Hospitality of the inhabitants of the place
—Their expressive gestures—Sketch of their character—Or-
dinary drefs of the women. Page 6

L E T T E R III.

From Palermo.—

L E T-

LETTER IV.

From Agrigentum.—Ruins of that country. Page 12

LETTER V.

From Malta.—Idea of the town.—Serpents tongues petrified by St. Paul. Page 14

LETTER VI.

From Malta.—Rules of the Order—Government—Observations respecting food.—Relation of the enterprises of the Turks against Malta.—Conjecture on the probable fate of the order. Page 18

LETTER VII

Argentiere.—Description of that island—Hospitality of the inhabitants—Dress of the women—Their familiarity with strangers. Page 25

LETTER VIII.

Salonica.—Our arrival at Smyrna—Mitylene—Tenedos—Troas—Plague during the siege of Troy.—Lemnos, anciently celebrated for its wines.—Mount Athos, Olympus, Ossa and Pelion. Page 29

LETTER IX.

Salonica.—Ramazan, or Turkish Lent—Form of prayer, and ablution.—Respect of the Turks for fools—Very ancient in the East. Page 36

LET-

CONTENTS.

vii

LETTER X.

Salonica.—Description of that city—Population.—Jews—
Ill treatment of them.—Government, in whom it resides.—
Burial places.—Meeting a young Turkish lady. Page 41

LETTER XI.

Salonica.—Dissatisfaction expressed by the Turks on ac-
count of some foreign ships of war.—Antiquities of Salonica
—Caloyers—Dervises.—Dress of some Greek peasants.—
Amusements of the Franks at Salonica. Page 46

LETTER XII.

Sciato.—Description of this island. Page 50

LETTER XIII.

Zea.—Description of this island.—Method of making wine.
—Remarkable ancient law of this island. Page 53

LETTER XIV.

Athens.—Porto Rafti—Papas—Olive-trees, called Colym-
bades. Page 57

LETTER XV.

Athens.—Sentiments inspired by the sight of Athens.
Page 59

LET-

LETTER XVI.

Athens. — Affability of the Greek ladies. — *Caimac*. — *Bayram*, or Turkish Easter. — Visit to the aga. — Singular kind of pipe, called a *hookah*. — Turkish music. — *Sophas*. — Visit to the *despot*, or the Greek archbishop. — Animosity of the inhabitants towards the *cadi*. Page 61

LETTER XVII.

Athens. — Superb ruins of Athens — The *Acropolis* — The *Parthenon*, or temple of Minerva — Temples of Neptune Erechtus, and of Minerva *Poliades* — The *Pandrosea* — Theatre of Bacchus — The Museus — Theseus — Pantheon — The Ilyffus. The fountain Callirrhœ — Stadium. Page 66

LETTER XVIII.

Athens. — Lantern of Demosthenes. — Ruins of the temple of Jupiter Olympus. — The ports Phalerea, Munichia, and Pirea. Page 71

LETTER XIX.

Athens. — Arch of Adrian. — Mounts Parnes and Pentellicus. — Mount Hymettus — Honey found upon that mount. — Why the ancients built their towns upon eminencies. — Population of Athens. — Luxury alledged against the ancient Athenians, as the cause of their corruption and ruin — How ill founded — Esteem in which the Greeks held beauty. — Comparison between the Athenians and Spartans. Page 74

LET.

CONTENTS.

ix

LETTER XX.

Athens.—Opinion of the ancients on the origin of man.—
Temple by the Athenians to *the unknown gods*.—Religion of
the modern Greeks—Their funeral ceremonies Page 82

LETTER XXI.

Smyrna.—Situation of this town—Beseiteins—Bazars.—
Number of inhabitants—Government—Mosques, synagogues,
churches. Page 88

LETTER XXII.

Smyrna.—Recruits.—Environs of the country. Page 95

LETTER XXIII.

Smyrna.—Little Bayram.—Camels.—Brutality of a Turk.
Page 98

LETTER XXIV.

Smyrna.—Empirics.—Greek women.—Limited marriages.
Page 101

LETTER XXV.

Dardanelles.—Promontory Sigeum.—Tomb of Achilles.—
The Scamander.—The Hellespont.—Abidos. Page 106

LETTER XXVI.

The Dardanelles.—Plain of Abidos, where Xerxes reviewed
b his

his army.—Reflections of Artabanus on the evils of life—
Commandants of the two castles of the Dardanelles—Enor-
mous size of the guns of these castles.—A grave called *gerida*
by the Turks. Page 108

LETTER XXVII.

Constantinople.—Departure from the Dardanelles.—Pro-
pontides.—Gallipoli.—Island of Marmara.—View of Con-
stantinople. Page 116

LETTER XXVIII.

Constantinople.—The port.—Ambassadors.—Visit to the
kaimachan. Page 119

LETTER XXIX.

State of the Turkish fleet on its return from the Black
Sea.—Reflection on the war of the Turks with Russia.—
Taverns shut by order of government.—Conversation with a
Turk. Page 125

LETTER XXX.

Constantinople.—Tombs of the grand signior's children.—
St. Sophia.—Front of the seraglio.—Fountains.—Burned
column.—The hippodrome.—Number of royal mosques.—
Egyptian obelisk.—Column in bronze.—Subterraneous vault
supported by 100 pillars.—Befesteins. Page 132

LETTER XXXI.

Constantinople.—Procession of the grand signior.—Singular
carriages.

CONTENTS.

xi

carriages.—Population of Constantinople, and the causes of it.—Insolence of the populace.—General character of the Turks.—They love no nation. Page 140

LETTER XXXII.

Constantinople.—The seraglio—The guns by which it is defended.—Our landing near the garden of cypress-trees.—Constantinople forms a triangle—Circuit of this city—Continual charms to be seen in the port.—Canal—The sort of fishes it abounds with.—The Turks bequeath legacies in favour of pigeons, cats, and dogs. Page 147

LETTER XXXIII.

Constantinople.—Toleration of the Turks—To what it is to be attributed.—The eternity of future rewards and punishments, a fundamental point of the Mahomedan religion—Not believed by some sects.—The hell of Mahomet has seven gates—What the commentators understand by the seven gates.—Predestination very ancient in the east—Influence of this dogma.—Opinion which prevails among the Turks, that we ought to distrust felicity.—The Mahomedans believe the Old and New Testament.—Conversation with a dervise, who makes a defence of his religion. Page 152

LETTER XXXIV.

Constantinople.—Greek patriarchs—Their titles—Tribute which

which the patriarch of Constantinople pays to the port.—
Lent of the Greeks.—Idea of their religion.—Hatred of the
Greeks towards those of the Romish communion.—Arme-
nians.—Jews singular superstition.—Sketch of the character
of the Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. Page 161

LETTER XXXV.

Constantinople.—Canal of Constantinople.—Coup-d'œils
in the Bosphorus.—Cyanean islands.—Black Sea.—Turkish
mode of making coffee—Great consumption of that article.
—Burying places of Constantinople. Page 167

LETTER XXXVI.

Constantinople.—Frequency of fire—The cause of it.—
Manner in which the Turks spend their time in coffee-
houses.—Renegadoes. Page 175

LETTER XXXVII.

Constantinople.—Passion of the Greeks for dancing.—
Dervises of Pera, Tophana, and Scutari.—Morality of cer-
tain fantons, called *Kalender*. Page 180

LETTER XXXVIII.

Constantinople.—Count Bonneval's tomb—Some particu-
lars concerning that famous renegado. Page 185

LET-

CONTENTS.

xiii

LETTER XXXIX.

Constantinople.—Idea of the Turks respecting women.—
Harems—Difficulty of seeing them.—Polygamy. Page 189

LETTER XL.

Constantinople.—Idea of the progress the Turks have made
in the mechanic arts.—Physic in great estimation among the
Turks.—Their literature. Page 192

LETTER XLI.

Constantinople.—Scerbet—Pipes, &c. Page 196

LETTER XLII.

Mycone.—Description of this island—Character of the
inhabitants—Myconian beauties. Page 199

LETTER XLIII.

Gibraltar.—Idea of the town. Page 203

LETTER XLIV.

Gibraltar.—St. Michael's cavern. Page 207

LETTER XLV.

Tunis.—Situation of Tunis—Population of the town.

Page 210

LET-

CONTENTS.

LETTER XLVI.

Tunis.—Public sale of negro women.—Visit to the bey.
Page 214

LETTER XLVII.

Carthage.—Ruins of Carthage.—Arabs—Their manner of living—Tents.
Page 219

LETTER XLVIII.

Tripoli.—Account of that city—Ruins of a triumphal arch—Privileges enjoyed there by the Franks.
Page 225

LETTER XLIX.

Porto Farina.—Adultery severely punished among the Barbarians.—History of a renegado.
229

LETTER L.

Toulon.—Population of this city.
Page 232

LETTER LI.

Marfeilles.—Some account of that city.
Page 234

LETTER LII.

Leghorn.—Statue of Cosmo I.
Page 236

LETTER LIII.

Sardinia.—Character of the inhabitants of that island.
Page 239

BSB
MÜNCHEN



Taylor, fecit

LETTERS

ON VARIOUS PARTS OF

EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA.

LETTER I.

Palermo, April 29, 1788.

WE arrived here four days ago. My want of acquaintance in the place, is in some sort compensated by the pleasure which novelty inspires. How do I regret being unable to share it with you!

This capital of Sicily, which is bordered by the Tyrrhene Sea, is situated at the foot of a chain of mountains which form an amphitheatre around it, and supply the city with a plenty of clear and falubrious water. As the outside view of the place is far from prepossessing, the traveller feels an

B

agreeable

agreeable surprize to find it, on a cloſer inſpection, a beautiful, extenſive, and well peopled town; containing, within the circuit of fix miles, 100,000 inhabitants. Two large ſtreets, the *Caffero* and the *Strada Nuova*, each a mile long, and which interſect each other at right angles, divide the town into four parts, correſponding with the four principal gates. Theſe ſtreets have the advantage of a foot-path, are well paved, and light at night, and are decorated with ſplendid buildings. The centre where they meet forms a beautiful octagon, called the Piazza Villena, each ſide of which preſents a beautiful aſſemblage of the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders, a fountain, and three ſtatues. A ſimilar coup d'œil is not to be met with in any other city in Europe.

The public places, ſtatues, obeliſks, and fountains, are not amongſt the objects moſt worthy of notice. The Prætor's fountain, however, from its deſign, the beauty of its marble, the great number of animals, monſters, and ſtatues with which it is adorned, the diſpoſition of its baluſtrade, and the extent of its circumference, which is 515 feet, paſſes among the connoiſſeurs for a chef d'œuvre of art. The churches are enriched with porphyry, precious ſtones, and gold and ſilver plate, and are ornamented with the moſt beautiful marble, eſpecially alabaſter, which nature, who has dealt moſt bountifully with this iſland, has ſupplied it with in abundance. The architecture of ſome is excellent, and in ſeveral are to be ſeen the paintings of the firſt Italian maſters. As this climate is calculated to inſpire indolence and devotion, you
will

will not think it extraordinary that here are no less than eighty nunneries and convents. From a like cause, too, the people are very humane and charitable; the city affording many public monuments of the benevolence of its inhabitants, as it contains seven hospitals, and a general asylum for the poor.

What a charming country! Nature has lavished on it her choicest gifts, which art and industry have united to cultivate and improve.

In what terms am I to describe the public promenade, called the Flora? The name itself expresses much, but it does not convey enough. It is a garden situated out of the town on the banks of the sea, wherein the enchantments of that of Armida seem in sort to be realized, since every gloomy idea vanishes the moment you enter it. Here rows of orange trees, formed into walks, exhale the most delicious perfume; while arbours, impenetrable to the rays of the sun, and through whose cool recesses the fragrant jessamine expands its sweets, seem formed to indulge in pleasing reveries, or for the enjoyment of that tender melancholy which is sometimes the greatest of pleasures.

In other parts are spouting fountains, and ponds gay with the varied lustre of those golden fish which the new world supplies to the luxury of the old: the murmur of the waters, the warbling of the amorous choristers, the rich variety of the flowers, whose delicious essence is wafted by the gentle zephyr through the surrounding atmosphere, and the nymphs

who walk there, all contribute to inspire with voluptuousness the odoriferous air of this delightful spot.

Summer, more especially, is the season when the inhabitants of Palermo frequent this promenade. When the sun, departing from the western horizon, remits his scorching rays, hither they resort in crowds to enjoy the refreshing breeze, and join the melody of the love-sick tale to the dying murmurs of the waves expiring on the coast; softening the obduracy of the fair, and yielding to all those sweet and innocent emotions which the presence of those we love always excites. The shades of night quickly seem to disperse, to make way for artificial day, which, in the Flora, appears in a thousand varied shapes. Then is seen a promiscuous assembly of people, without distinction of age, or sex, or rank, joy expressed in every face; while many a petty crime against amorous fidelity escapes the wandering eye. The charms of music now succeed, and the sighs of lovers are lost in the harmony of clarionets, hautboys, flutes, and violins.

Out of the town, and but a little way from the Flora, is a spot, whither numbers of people, from time to time, are drawn together. Beneath the church of a Capuchin convent are to be seen a thousand of our fellow-creatures, who seem all perfectly content with their lot; these are deceased persons, placed upright in niches. Some of them which have been deposited there upwards of a hundred years, are in such a state of preservation, that, to judge of them from the freshness of their beards and skin, they would not seem to have taken up
 5 their

their abode there above a week. At the sight of such objects, a melancholy sensation is felt by the spectator, which he is unable to repress. It is the more painful, as it mortifies his vanity by destroying those chimerical ideas of felicity, and magnificent projects of greatness, which imagination delights to form. I experienced it in common with the rest; but, when its first effect was past, I found myself capable of contemplating these spectres at leisure, and unmoved. Some there were that struck me with horror; others again excited laughter, and seemed themselves to laugh "in their sleep." From all, however, might be gathered this lesson: that since we are here but to look around us, then to fall and mingle our ashes with those who have gone before, we ought to enjoy, while we can, that life whose component particles are thus fugitive and transitory; nor ought we ever to forget that virtue is our highest duty and most exalted pleasure.

L E T.

L E T T E R II.

Palermo, May 2, 1788.

I WENT last night to the theatre, from which I did not return greatly edified. As there is no opera at present, the people here amuse themselves in going to see Punchinello. A great number of ladies were present. Punch uttered a number of silly jests and obscene *doubles entendres*. The ladies laughed more than any body; and, for my own part, I blushed for them. What seems extraordinary is, that, after permitting their modesty to be daily hurt at such-like exhibitions, their infidelity should be wondered at. True it is, that they are naturally of an amorous complexion; the climate, in conjunction with the sulphur of *Ætna*, operating upon them very powerfully: but, for this very reason, either every moral cause which may promote this effect should be removed, or its consequence ought not to be complained of. Instead of this, the women are watched, confined, reproved; and the men have the effrontery even to affect surprise at their being no better. How many husbands are there here, who, after the example of the Romans, would erect temples to Venus Verticordia! But after all,

as

as La Fontaine would say, what useless anxiety about a trifle! for, according to the poet,

'Tis but a trifle when we know it ;
Nothing when we don't.

It is probable, however, that the men of Palermo would not easily be brought into this way of thinking.

I have lately seen the public library at the *Accademia Reale*, a name given here to the university. The hall is very spacious, and the superb ruins of Agrigentum, Segeste, and Syracuse, are to be seen there in fresco. This library contains, among others, a great number of English authors. Here are all the works of Swift, Bolingbroke, Hume, Addison, Chesterfield, Pope, &c.

In general the inhabitants of Palermo are possessed of talents : to the study of the dead languages they unite that of French and English, which many speak, especially among the nobility, who have the rage of doing every thing à l'Angloise. They make private literary parties, principally for the study of poetry ; for all are poets here by nature.

Italy, as you well know, being indebted to Sicily for its first poetical essays, there are now among them writers not unworthy of Theocritus and Moschus. The Sicilians are fond of writing in their own language, which is the ancient Sicilian idiom corrupted and spoiled by a mixture of Greek, Latin, Norman, Arabic, Italian, and French, and which I think very soft and expressive, especially in the mouth of a
pretty

pretty woman. The poetical productions of the Archbishop *Rau* are chefs d'œuvres. Anacreon and Sappho have been lately revived in the verses of *Signor Miele*: he is even sometimes more delicate than the former. I am sorry you do not understand this language; for I would have sent you his Idyls and Seasons, which, I am persuaded, would have afforded you pleasure.

The study of antiquity is much cultivated here, and some individuals are in possession of choice collections; the country, and even the capital itself, supplies them with materials. In fact, I understand that the lances, shields, helmets, crests, as well as the chalk pots, and all the trinkets in gold, silver, and omichite marble, which are to be seen in the Museum, have been found (and are so daily) in the Phœnician and Carthaginian monuments without the Porte Neuve.

L E T-

L E T T E R III.

Palermo, May 1788.

AS the people of Palermo are very fond of foreigners, they have shewn me every thing, explained every thing, and indeed loaded me with civilities. They are however reproached with indifference, and even sometimes hatred, towards their own countrymen; but this is not an accusation merely of the present day, for the ancient Genius of Palermo, kept in the senatorial palace, is represented under the form of an old man, who has a serpent on his breast, with this device : *Alienos nutrit, se ipsum devorat.*

The Palermians are an acute and penetrating people. They are eloquent ; but their eloquence is of that sort which manifests itself less by words than gestures : when they become in the least heated, their passions are instantly portrayed on their countenances, and they gesticulate in a more than ordinary degree. In common too with the rest of the Sicilians, they express themselves by motions of their hands, feet, head, shoulders, and eyes. The invention of this latter language is attributed to despotism and tyranny, and its origin is dated from the days of the tyrant Gelon. Since women, however,

excel in it, why not rather assign the credit of its discovery to so able and so indefatigable a tutor as Love? Has he not, in some parts of Barbary, invented a language of flowers?

To finish this sketch of the Palermian character, which in general is that of the Sicilians at large, they are brave, and have fencing-schools without number. They are passionately fond of public entertainments, and, during their continuance, abandon themselves to such transports of joy, that one would think they were afraid pleasure was about to cease for ever, or that they should not live to partake of it again. Love makes them jealous; and revenge blinds them to such a degree, as sometimes to make them guilty of murder. They are incapable of dissimulation, hasty, suspicious, and passionate, on which account they always succeed badly at court; and such is the litigious character of this people, that they prefer going to law, to settling their differences amicably. Great skill is necessary to govern them, for they are extremely tenacious in this point. About ten years ago, the viceroy Fogliami gave them such cause for dissatisfaction by his conduct, that they had determined to massacre him; and this they would have effected, had he not saved himself in a coal-barge at Messina. The prince Caraminica, who governs them at present, has but one inconvenience to fear, which is, that of being compelled to remain for ever amongst them.

The ancient Sicilians erected temples to Greediness and Gluttony: the moderns ought to pay divine honours to Daintiness; for in no nation upon earth are made such quantities
of

of sweet-meats, liqueurs, ices, confectionary, *bon bons*, in short, of every thing sweet and luscious. Their *cassata*, however, must be acknowledged excellent; it is a sort of tart, the ingredients of which are cream, chocolate, pistachios, Savoy biscuits, and preserved citron.

I must not forget to mention the ordinary dress of the women here. Over a black silk petticoat they throw a cloak of the same stuff and colour, a part of which they tie round the body: the remaining part they raise above the head, and cover the face with it, so that the eyes and nose only are visible. Ladies of the first quality have not failed to adopt this dress, which is so well calculated to favour private intrigues; besides, it is at the same time convenient and economical, especially in the summer season, when, as I am told, the women wear no other.

L E T T E R IV.

Agrigentum, May 1788.

I QUITTED Palermo with regret; having begun to feel an attachment to a place, where superstition, knowledge, and pleasure are so happily blended together.

Amidst the picturesque views which present themselves on all sides in coasting round this island, the ruins of Agrigentum claim particular regard. Viewing them through our telescopes, and afterwards with the naked eye, they excited in us an emotion which, as we approached them nearer, imagination raised to enthusiasm. At length we landed, and passing over some delightful valleys in which the charms of nature are heightened by the surrounding monuments of antiquity, at the distance of about four miles, we trod under feet the ruins of Agrigentum. Almost in a direct line, and in the midst of gardens, of which the almond tree constitutes the principal beauty, are four temples, and the ruins of several others. They are situated on a hill which is two miles from Girgenti. The temple of Venus is not entire; but that of Concord, which has probably served as a model for it, has sustained no injury from the ravages of time. It is of the
Doric

Doric order of architecture, composed of thirteen variegated columns in each wing, and six in the front. The bases, chapters, and architraves are entire, and the architecture of the whole is simple and pleasing. Nothing remains of the temples of Jupiter Olympus and of Hercules, but ruins. Some mutilated columns which have belonged to the latter, are seven feet in diameter. It contained the famous statue of Hercules which Verres wished to seize, as likewise the celebrated picture of that god, painted by Zeuxis, which he gave to the Agrigentines, because, as he said, they could never pay for it. Opposite to the temple is a tomb, supposed to be that of Theron, the first tyrant of Agrigentum, to whom Pindar dedicated some of his Olympics about three thousand years ago. This lapse of thirty ages, the idea of Pindar, Zeuxis, and the tyranny of Verres, against whom the Roman orator was obliged to employ the full force of his eloquence, made such an impression on us in contemplating these ruins, that we did nothing but gaze on, measure, and rapturously admire the scene before us. There are some other ruins in the neighbourhood; and what seems remarkable is, that all the stone of these edifices is a kind of concretion formed of oyster and other shells, and procured from the mountains on which they are situated. While we were lost in reflection upon these wonders, one of our company, who was the most affected at them, cried out in his enthusiasm, that Pomponace perhaps was not to blame in saying, that *Se il mondo non e eterno, per Dio Santo e molto vecchio.*

L E T-

L E T T E R V.

Malta, May 1788.

WE did not lose sight of *Ætna* till we entered this port; for Malta, which is to the south of Sicily, is separated from it only by a channel of twenty-six leagues. Nature, in forming this port out of the rock, has been so sportive in the operation, that she has made several, the entrance to which is as much defended by its smallness, as by two very strong castles which command it. It is surrounded by several well fortified towns, which are quite white; for the villages of La Valette, such as Villena and Burmula (which next to La Valette is the most populous, and the inhabitants of which are much attached to commerce), the island St. Michael (whose castle St. Elme is one of the two which defend the entrance of the port), and the fortrefs La Cottonera, may likewise be called little towns all lying round La Valette, as a capital. The free-stone of the country, which is extremely white, is used here to build with; and as the streets are paved with the same materials, it produces a very painful effect on the eyes, especially in summer. The houses are only two stories high, and the roofs resemble platforms.

The

The balconies are almost always inclosed, either on account of the heat, or from a motive of jealousy. I should be the more disposed to attribute this to the latter cause, as the women look always through gratings or windows, and never shew themselves in public. The grand master's hotel and St. John's church may be reckoned among the finest buildings of the place. The roof of the latter is of painted stone, and the pavement of marble tombs, whose inscriptions are not always very edifying. In the chapel of the saint are two lustres of massy gold; and behind the great altar is a beautiful cross with a St. Sacrament of the same metal, of most exquisite workmanship, by artists of the country. The hospital and the surgery merit attention. The religious library, which is open every day, and to which every one may have access, contains a number of books, a little statue of Hercules in marble, lately discovered in the country, and a collection of medals and natural productions which have been very lately formed.

The inhabitants are of a deep brown, which demonstrates this to be the beginning of the climate of Africa. They are very industrious, and speak Arabic, or rather a jargon in which are many words of that language. The women are, for the most part, supported by the humanity of the old commanders, towards whom, however, their gratitude is not always rigidly confined; and as the order enjoins celibacy, pretty girls are to be found all over the country whose virtue is not impregnable; so that, it is probable, the credit of fathering the
greatest

greatest part of the children born here, may be due to St. John, or his knights. The dress of the women is singular: they wear a short silk petticoat, which displays a fine leg and foot, and a neat shoe and stocking, an article of attire in which they are exceedingly nice and curious. Over a white veil that covers their head they throw a sort of black cloak, somewhat less than that of the Palermians, which, descending on the shoulders, inclines a little to the right, and hides the front and one half of the figure, so that they see with one eye only.

There are neither thieves nor vagabonds in this town, and so little noise, that one imagines oneself in a convent. Its commerce consists in oranges, of which the Maltese are so extraordinarily careful, that, in order to improve their growth, they import mould from Sicily: they likewise trade in oats, cumin, anise, and cotton; the last of which they manufacture so well, that their stockings and bed-covers, on account of their excellence, are in great request all over Europe. They export also the stone of the country in large quantities to Sicily, Naples, Barbary, and the Levant. Their little dogs, so much valued by the ancients, continue to be in great estimation. Theophrastus, in his chapter on Silly Vanity, says, That if a vain man lost a favourite puppy, he buried him, with an epitaph signifying that *he was of the Maltese breed*. This island is sixty miles in circumference, and contains 100,000 inhabitants; for, besides La Valette, and the ancient town Notable, which are two leagues apart, there
are

are fifty towns and villages. The inhabitants believe, that since St. Paul was in the island the serpents are not poisonous; that the viper will not generate in it; and that when brought here, it cannot even live. They shew you the tongues of serpents petrified by St. Paul, who, as some learned men affirm, was never in the place. These pretended tongues, however, are nothing but fossil fish-bones and glossopetræ.

The principal islands near Malta, which are likewise under the jurisdiction of the grand master, are Gozo and Comino, in which are several well fortified little towns. The island of Gozo is thirty miles in circumference; it contains above 10,000 inhabitants, and is in a respectable state of defence. Glossopetræ and alabaster are found here in abundance.

The emperor Charles V. in the year 1530, gave this territory, with the islands annexed to it, in perpetuity to the religious order of St. John, together with its dependant rights and jurisdiction; exacting only, as an acknowledgment of faith and homage to the crown of Sicily, an annual tribute to him and his successors of a sparrow hawk and falcon, to be delivered to the viceroy; which custom still exists.

L E T T E R VI.

Malta, May 1788.

THIS order consists of knights, almoners, and soldiers, of whom the two first only wear the cross of the order, that of the others having only three points. The number of knights amounts to upwards of three thousand. Previous to their admission, they are obliged to exhibit proofs of their noble descent, which differ according to the different languages. They make a vow of chastity, of obedience, and voluntary poverty. If the frailty of human nature prevents them from a rigid observance of the first of these vows, in return they voluntarily subscribe to the second, and necessity often compels them to keep the last. By another statute of their order, they are bound to persecute heathens, infidels, and Mahometans, after the example of the Maccabees, who gave no quarter to the enemies of the people of God; an idea not very reconcileable, perhaps, to the mild spirit of the gospel. The knights of justice are alone eligible to the posts of bailiffs, grand priors, and grand masters: the knights of grace are competent to all excepting these. The military brothers are of two sorts. Some of them perform the same functions
in

in war, and in the duties of the hospital, as the knights. Others are destined to the service of religion; and their employment is to sing the praises of God in the conventual church, and to serve by turns as chaplains on board the ships and galleys of the order. The brothers of obedience, that is to say, the priests, without being obliged to go to Malta like the rest, make the same vows, and devote themselves to the service of some one church of the order, under the authority of a grand prior, or commander, to whom they become subject, and then they enjoy some privilege. There are also some demi-crosses, who, by express permission, are authorised to wear the golden cross with three points.

As by one of the statutes the grand master is invested with the power of punishing the priors, and other brothers of the order, who have been guilty of disobedience or neglect, the latter are continually making their court to him in order to gain his favour, the form of government being rather monarchical than aristocratic; for though in matters of importance the grand master can do nothing without his council, yet having two votes in himself, the balance on this account, as well as from the influence he possesses, always inclines in his favour. He has besides the right to coin money, to pardon criminals, and to appoint to the grand priories, and to the offices of bailiffs and commanders: the knights, whatever authority they possess, are subordinate to him in every thing not contrary to the statutes of the order. He has sixteen pages; and

when he passes along the streets, it is the duty of the knights instantly to stop, and salute him with profound respect.

The different nations of which the order is composed, are called languages. There are eight of them: Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Arragon, Germany, Castille, and England. They have each of them chiefs, who are here called piliers, or conventual bailiffs. The principal of those of Provence has the charge of grand commander; for Raimond du Puy, who about the beginning of the twelfth century formed the rules of the order, was a Provençal. The pilier of Auvergne is grand marshal; that of France is grand hospitaller; that of Italy, grand admiral; and that of Arragon, protector, who was formerly styled Drapier. The pilier of Germany is grand chancellor; and that of England, turcopolier, or general of infantry. The palace of each nation is called an inn, because the knights belonging to it dine and usually meet in it. Among the regulations relative to diet, the knights are forbidden to bring dogs to the inn, under the penalty of incurring the *septaine*; which consists in fasting seven days successively, and on the fourth and sixth Feriæ * to have bread and water only for their support; and to be subjected to the discipline, that is, to receive stripes with a switch from a priest of the order, during the performance of the psalm *Deus misereatur nostri*. The best of the matter is, that they are subject to the same punishment

* The Feria is a day of the week between Sunday and Saturday.

if,

if, on the days when they dine at the inn, they carry away bread, wine, or any thing else: a regulation which impresses us with no very exalted idea either of the delicacy of their stomachs, or their meals. It may be conceived too, that they are not often convicted of such high misdemeanours; for the punishment annexed to them would be too humiliating to persons who have proved I know not how many descents.

I need not inform you, that the Turks have made several attempts to get possession of this island. Gozo first felt the effects of their fury; for, not daring to attack Malta, they burned that town, and carried away the inhabitants prisoners, whom they sent to the galleys. About the middle of the sixteenth century, Soliman dispatched a squadron of fifty sail, small vessels not included, with 30,000 men, under the command of a pacha. Mustapha, nephew to the grand signor, though at the advanced age of seventy years, on account of his valour and experience embarked on board it, as commander of the land forces. This fleet was so considerably reinforced on the passage, that, before it arrived at Malta, it consisted of near one hundred and ninety sail. The Turks disembarked their troops at the port of Marfa Sirocco, and opened their batteries against the castle of St. Elme, which they carried in the fourth assault, and took twelve hundred prisoners, among whom were a hundred and twelve knights. They lost, however, above four thousand men on the spot, and among others, Dragut, king and bacha of Tripoli. They then attacked the fortress St. Michael; but finding they could
not

not easily make themselves masters of the place, they endeavoured to attack it at the same time by sea as well as land. A Greek renegado was appointed admiral for the execution of this design. The attack was sustained with such vigour, that the Turks, after losing five standards, were obliged to retreat. They, notwithstanding, hazarded a new assault on the town of St. Michael and the citadel; which occasioned much bloodshed to both parties, and would have finished favourably to the Turks, if the brave grand master, La Valette, old as he was, had not rallied the knights, who, piqued with honour, attacked the enemy with such intrepidity, that they drove them from the very rampart on which they had placed their standard. Under these circumstances it was that the king of Spain's fleet landed a body of troops, to succour the town on that part of the coast which is called Meleca. The Turks raised the siege on receiving intelligence of this aid, and Mustapha, at the head of 16,000 men, marched to engage the Christians in the plain of Talmaldil; where he was so roughly handled, that, after having lost three thousand men in this battle alone, he precipitately embarked his troops and fled. The siege was very bloody, and nine thousand persons, knights and soldiers, lost their lives in it. For the better defence of the island and town, the grand master laid the foundations of a new city on mount Sciberras, which after him was called La Valette. Towards the conclusion of the sixteenth century, the grand signor equipped a fleet of ninety sail, and sent it secretly against Malta, where the
troops

troops were disembarked in the night near Marfa Sirocco. The knights were not to be dismayed by danger or surprise, and behaved so gallantly, that, after some skirmishes, the Turks were routed, and compelled to reembark in haste, and retire to Tripoli. Since that time they have not appeared before Malta; so that the knights, having no materials for their courage, have sunk into a kind of apathy, out of which they are roused only by occasional disputes on national or individual pre-eminence. The antipathy that subsists between the French and Italian knights is, in particular, a source of perpetual animosity, which, in defiance of the punishments denounced by the order against the aggressor, often terminates in duels. They have further substituted the amusements of gaming to the fatigues of war; and the greater part of them are so violently addicted to this vice, that they often ruin themselves, if it happens that they have wherewithal to be ruined.

In all probability this order, which vanity, superstition, and poverty, have hitherto contributed to support, will not be of long duration, and the island perhaps will again become subject to the king of Naples. As the English faction compelled the order to make very great retrenchments in their expences, the revolutions in manners and politics which are likely to take place, by making new ones continually necessary, will reduce it into so poor a state, that, being no longer able to support itself, it must necessarily expire. This, indeed, is not clear to demonstration; but I am
nevertheless

nevertheless strongly inclined to such an opinion. It appears to me, that there is but one mean by which it can escape this threatened dissolution; which would be, for the knights to renew the offer lately made by them to the Christian powers, of clearing the seas, for a moderate subsidy, of the pirates of Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco. This corps might then be considered as of real utility; for at present, with its two frigates and galleys, it does but linger out an existence; nor would the failing of its fleet be any longer, as it is now, a subject for ridicule. Such a plan would be of the more real utility, since the barbarians, notwithstanding our consuls, our presents, and that base submission we pay them, always conclude by taking our ships from us;—from us, who supply them with arms, whose wealth and whose women are their prey, and who, besides suffering their depredations, encourage a spirit of apostacy and villany in our own countrymen, in affording them an opportunity, by abjuring their religion, of plundering their fellow-subjects.

I hope this digression has not been tedious; for though there is little interesting about a bailiff or a grand prior, it is pleasing to take a view of this society of religious warriors, whose arms have been so formidable to the Turks when in the splendour of their power, and whose efforts inspired them with more terror than those of all the Christian world beside. We see, too, in the grand master, a monarch at the head of 100,000 subjects, all satisfied under his government.

L E T-

L E T T E R VII.

Argentiere, May 28, 1788.

MALTA begins to recede from our view: scarcely is it now visible above the waves—they overwhelm it—it is no more.

The weather is beautiful; a soft breeze gently presses our canvases; the horizon is bounded by clouds only, through which we seek to pass.

What services did not he render to his fellow-creatures, whose bold and daring spirit first ventured on the liquid plain! Doubtless *illi robur & æs triplex circa pectus erat!* But a few days, and we are in the Egean sea. I am called to see Cythera, that island which gave birth to the queen of smiles. O Venus, since modesty is at thy side, we tender thee our vows! Accept the homage—our offerings are too pure to hurt thy bashfulness. Crete and Ida now appear, and give rise to new emotions, which augment in proportion as the imagination warms.

We are now near the two Sporades, Melos and Antimelos; we pass them—and anchor at *Cimoli*, called by the Greeks *Kimoli*, and by the Franks Argentiera, on account of the gold and silver mines which have been discovered there,

E

but

but of which the Greeks are silent, lest they should be obliged by their masters to work them.

This island is not far distant from Milo, and is only eight miles in circumference. The port, which is small, is not deep enough to admit ships of burden. The country is mountainous, stony, and almost barren. Here is none but cistern water, and very little of that. The small portion of land laid out in agriculture or vineyards, produces scarcely sufficient for the support of the inhabitants; so that they eat the grapes, and are obliged to get wine from Milo. The island grows likewise a little barley and cotton; but nature, which never bestows every thing, has denied it in trees what it has given it in silver. There is a great deal of that *terra cimolia* to which the ancients, among other properties, attributed that of curing the rheum. It is a sort of white chalk, fat and soapy, heavy, tasteless, and friable, used at present, as it was in the days of Pliny, to whiten linen. I am told, that in the baths at Smyrna they rub the skin with it. Game, on account of the multitude of sportsmen, is not plentiful. We have met with some partridges and hares, however; I shot at them with my usual skill, and you may guess that I missed them. The village contains at most three hundred souls. The houses are small and wretched, resembling rather cottages. The churches and chapels, which are very numerous, are better built. There is not a single Turk here; but there is a French consul, who does not omit every morning to display his flag.

We

We were at the house of the chief man of the village, whither the people of the country resorted to us in numbers, as they were very desirous of seeing us, and of hearing news. Their curiosity, their dress, hospitality, language, and figure, brought to our minds the pleasing recollection of those days in Greece, when a benevolent and generous people ran in crowds to the first stranger they met. This chief gave us some milk, which is all the country produces, and would accept of nothing in return. The ornaments of his house, agreeably to the mode and taste of the country, consisted in little gilt chalk pots, and pictures of saints drawn with flat faces. His white beard, his grave and majestic air, and, more than all, his great age and exemplary virtue, have gained him the confidence and love of his countrymen. They listened to him with great attention, and shewed the greatest deference to whatever he said. I am assured that, throughout Greece, the rigours of age are greatly softened by the complaisance, submission, and respect it universally meets with from youth; from which it would seem, that the representations of the ancients, in this respect, are less the productions of imagination, than faithful copies of nature.

These people are all sailors, and the greater part excellent pilots. Besides their own language, they speak Italian, French, and even English. The women knit cotton stockings, with which they supply the neighbouring islands. Their natural sprightliness, added to a desire of disposing of their

commodities, made them so familiar, that several of them took us by the arm, and pressed us to go home with them. This behaviour has given rise to a report, that their virtue is not proof against seduction, which indeed I understand to be so far true, when they are enabled by the sale of it to procure the price of an absolution, the refusal of which they consider as a great calamity. In general they are neither handsome nor ugly; they have a great deal of *embonpoint*, and very thick legs, which they esteem a beauty, and, to increase their natural size, they wear several pairs of stockings. Their dress is curious and neat: over a shirt, which buttons down the breast, and descends to the middle of the leg, they put a gilt waistcoat with a red border, which, while it confines the breast, does not hinder it from rising; to this they add a sort of handkerchief which floats behind; they wear white stockings, and little boots, with yellow Morocco slippers, and turbans of various sorts.

All the children of the village asked us for *paras*, a Turkish coin worth about three farthings. The country is truly wretched: nevertheless great crimes are rare in it.

The inhabitants pay an annual tribute to the grand signior of five piaftres per head, which amounts nearly to a crown. The women and priests, it seems, are not computed in this capitation.

L E T-

L E T T E R VIII.

Salonica, June 3, 1788.

SURROUNDED by the enchantments of fable, we traversed the Egean sea, with varied emotions of pleasure, rapture, and astonishment at every object we beheld. Every island and rock, even the sky, and the sea itself, are interesting to the classical observer. Hence the world has been peopled with gods, heroes, legislators, poets, orators, philosophers, and artists; and with women too, whose beauty gave animation to the marble under the hands of Phidias and Praxiteles: and when we reflect that nothing more remains of them but their ashes, who can repress the heaving sigh?

We are now coasting along Ionia. The country of Homer presents itself to view, and attracts our whole attention. On the shore are handsome buildings, and the flags of various nations are seen flying in the port. A forest of cypresses, which commands the town, gives a melancholy, yet majestic air to the whole country. These houses, which are of wood, recall to my recollection the capital of the kingdom

dom of Cræsus, which was built of reeds. The dread of the plague obliges us to leave this place : it now rages with great fury.

Calms, and the approach of night, obliged us to anchor at Lesbos in the harbour of Metelin, which stands on the ruins of the ancient Mitylene, the very port in which the Athenians triumphed over the Spartans. Cruel Sappho, unhappy Alceus was not unworthy of thy love ! but Phaon's obduracy well revenged his wrongs. We hear a frightful howling—it proceeds from the terrified Turks ; who, not knowing our vessel, are making fires on the castle to give an alarm, which they further endeavour to spread by their cries.

The sky is serene ; and now that the greater part of mankind, forgetful of their cares, are wrapped in sleep, these wretches are kept awake by their fears ; while we remain upon deck, continuing our conversation on this island, which has still charms for us. It was formerly renowned for its fertility, the beauty of its women, the excellence of its wines, especially those of Methymne, and the skill of its musicians ; the celebrated Arion being a native of this place, as well as Terpander, who put the seven first strings to the lyre. The number of towns in this island was seven, Mitylene, Methymne, Troas, Antissa, Pyrra, Arisba, and Ereffos the birth-place of Theophrastus, who made this memorable speech to his disciples, on his death-bed : “ Life
“ is delusive ; it promises us great pleasure in the posses-
“ sion

“ sion of glory ; but scarcely have we begun to live, when
“ we are called to die. No passion is often more fruitless
“ than a love of fame. Nevertheless, my disciples, be con-
“ tented : if you set little value on the esteem of men, you
“ will save yourselves much labour ; if your courage does
“ not sink under it, glory may happen to be your recom-
“ pense. Remember only that there are many useless things
“ in life, and few which lead to a sure end.”

We dwelt too with pleasure on the idea of being now in the port of a city formerly so remarkable for its magnificent buildings, and whose theatre furnished Pompey the Great with a model for the one he built at Rome, and which contained upwards of 40,000 persons ; where Epicurus and Aristotle taught for some time, and in which Marcellus passed his days in philosophical retirement after the battle of Pharsalia. This town gave birth to Alceus, the tenth muse, whose famous ode we have solemnly recited. The historian Hellanicus was born here ; as was Pittacus, one of the seven sages, who became the tyrant of his country in order to restore liberty to it.

The rising sun at length gratified our impatience to behold the island. It is pretty well cultivated, the soil and climate being very favourable to the production of wine, olives, corn, and figs. A near view of the mosques and houses strangely deranged our last night's illusions. The Turks soon recovered from their terror ; but we did not go on shore, on account of the plague, which drove us hence, as it did from Smyrna.

This

This island is to the east of Asia Minor, and is a hundred and fifty miles in circumference. Black marble was formerly procured from its quarries.

We cast anchor at Tenedos, *statio malè fida carinis*, opposite to the kingdom of Priam. In the numerous summits, the lofty pines, the water and the woods of mount Ida, we beheld the original of that picture which the immortal Homer drew three thousand years ago. Troy is no more; but this famous city, with the fleet and army of confederated Greece, still exist in the pages of Homer and Virgil. There are here some magnificent ruins in marble, which, as we were informed, are the wrecks of a gymnasium of the second Troy, one of the eighteen cities which bore the name of Alexander. These ruins are the more venerable, by being embosomed in consecrated groves, and situated in the middle of a plain watered by the Simois, which is afterwards lost under the summit of mount Ida. The like scourge which hindered us from landing at Smyrna and Lesbos, prevented us from going ashore here. We wished much to tread that earth which has been drenched with the blood of so many heroes; but we were obliged to have patience.

The island of Tenedos, rendered immortal by the retreat of the Grecian fleet, still retains its former name, and continues to be inhabited by Greeks, who carefully cultivate its soil. The muscadine grapes of this island are excellent, and much sought after throughout the Levant. The village, as it appeared from our vessel, is built on ancient ruins, and contains
nothing

nothing remarkable. It is one of the islands reduced by the Persians in a very extraordinary manner, if we can credit Herodotus, the father of history, who tells us, that the inhabitants of Chio and Lesbos, two islands of considerable extent, together with those of Tenedos, were caught by the barbarians in a sort of net; for the latter, taking each other by the hand, and forming a line from north to south, drove the people before them. What seems most curious is, that the above historian, after having spoken of the conquest of the Ionian towns on the continent by the same fleet, very seriously adds, that the Persians did not attempt to take the inhabitants of these in like manner; for this, says he, would have been impossible. Admitting the truth of the former account, nothing seems to have been easier.

In reflecting on the antiquity of the plague in the east, I cannot forget that which broke out at Troy during the siege. It first attacked the mules and dogs, and afterwards the soldiers. The poet ascribes it to divine wrath, as the Jewish psalmist does the plagues of Egypt, which produced the same effect. Some commentators affirm, that Providence has disposed things in this manner, to give men time to see and to repent of their crimes. What a pity that those gentlemen themselves were not then living! the soldiers would have been warned to be on their guard, and the mules would have been spared.

We paid a visit to the island of Lemnos, called by the Greeks *Stalimene*, after the name of its ancient capital. It forms a

F

square

square of almost twenty-one miles, and produces vines, corn, &c. which are cultivated by the Greeks. The *Terra Lemnia*, of which the ancients have said so much, is found here in great plenty. As it is so celebrated, I shall mention it also, in order to inform you that our pilot endeavoured to persuade us that it is a remedy for all diseases; whence I conclude, that it is good for nothing. Not having landed, however, we did not see it. Homer says, that wine was carried from this island to the siege of Troy; and I am not surprised that Juno sent hither for the god of sleep. Hither poor Vulcan was precipitated from heaven; but the explanation of this fable is, that there are here a number of subterraneous fires. Pliny mentions a famous labyrinth in this island, of which he had seen the ruins; whilst that of Crete, says he, is no more. The hundred and fifty columns of the building, manufactured with a lapidary's wheel, were suspended from a peculiar machine, and might be turned by a child. We staid here an hour, and afterwards continued our journey.

We next beheld Strymon and Stagira. Happy country! thy Aristotle will enjoy a fame as lasting as that of his pupil Alexander!

Why does mount Athos hide his head in the clouds? I have discovered the reason: to conceal the blushes excited by surrounding ignorance and superstition, which seem to have taken up their residence in the fourscore convents of the Caloyers. These are monks (lazy drones) of the order of
St.

St. Basil, who do very little honour to their founder. They amount to fix hundred in number; and the convents have artillery to defend them against banditti. It is said, that they are in possession of some very ancient and rare manuscripts; and that they do not read them, which I can easily credit. Herodotus tells us, that Xerxes pierced the isthmus of this promontory.

We had now in view Olympus, which separated Macedonia from Thessaly, the valley of which, anciently called Tempe, still retains the same name, and also Ossa and Pelion. This view, like many others which have delighted us, would throw a poet into ecstasy; for we, who are not inspired by the muses, cannot refrain from admiration. Some of us are even become poets; and who that breathes this air, in which the muses were nursed, and which kindled the fire of the greatest geniuses of Greece, can help catching a portion of enthusiastic ardour?

We passed from the gulf Syngiticus to that of Thermaicus, and anchored in the bay of Thermes, Thessalonica or Salonica, in the country of the Myrmidons.

L E T T E R IX.

Salonica, June 15, 1788.

THANK God, the plague is not here!—The Turks being now in their holy month, the *Ramazan*, which is their Lent, the minarets of above forty mosques present magnificent illuminations every night. As Mahomet received the Koran from heaven in the moon *Ramazan*, he consecrated it to fasting, from which it derives its name. This Lent is far more rigid than that of the Roman Catholics; the Turks not being allowed to eat any thing all the day, and still less to drink, or to smoke. Those therefore who have nothing to do, go to sleep, to avoid languor; or gravely lounge on the sofa of a shop, and kill time by continually turning the beads of a rosary, and looking at the passengers. Immediately after sun-set, the *muezzins*, or criers of the mosques, give notice that it is time for Mussulmen to dine; but their impatience generally anticipates this warning. They then set about their prayers and ablutions with all possible dispatch, that they may the sooner enjoy their pipe and their coffee.

I must not forget to tell you, that the *minarets* are towers
built

built in the form of spires, gradually diminishing upwards, with a gallery at about one third of their height, and terminating in a point, over which is placed a golden cross. The criers, entering this gallery through a door which opens eastwards towards Mecca, put their hands on their ears as if they were going to stop them, and, first turning round towards the four cardinal points, repeat these words in a tone as if they were chanting: "God is great—God is God—there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet. Come to good works, hasten to prayers, &c." This notice they repeat five times a day. On these occasions many repair to the mosques; but the greater number pray in their own houses, or wherever they may then happen to be.

I dined to day with a Turk. The gates were shut a little before sun-set; and I was waiting at the port for our boat to take me on board. The surgeon of the ship was with me; and as we knew not what to do with ourselves, we went into a Turkish coffeehouse on the beach, and were extremely happy to find nobody in it but the master. The *muezzins* having at this time begun to call the people to prayers, the coffeehouse-keeper instantly betook himself to a neighbouring fountain, knelt down, raised his eyes towards heaven, then turned them downwards to the earth, which he appeared to kiss; and began to wash his hands, feet, arms, head, neck, ears, nose and nostrils with a surprising air of gravity and devotion. Having finished his prayers and ablutions, he spread out a mat before the door of the coffeehouse, and

and placing upon it a large dish of tinned copper, two feet in diameter, and containing five or six different sorts of meat, he and his servant sat down together cross-legged to partake of a repast. As we looked at him from motives of curiosity, he thought the cravings of hunger were felt as strongly at our stomachs as at his own, and invited us by signs to dinner with him, adding, in Italian, *Mangiare, mangiare*. This invitation, an act of hospitality in which the Turks are never deficient, we readily accepted. The dishes consisted of mutton steaks, and forced-meat balls filled with spices, which the Turk seemed greatly to prize, for he observed to me that it was *bono*: there were likewise fish, and pilaw, which consists of dry rice boiled with mutton fat. We ate with our fingers, for in general the Turks use neither forks nor spoons. With respect to the pilaw, we were obliged to give that up, not liking it so well, nor being able to manage it so dexterously as our companions, who swallowed it after having first made it into balls with their fingers. Their bread is a sort of cake pretty well tasted: the Turks use no other, or at least give the preference to this above every other kind. As it is not customary here to drink during meals, the two Mussulmen got up to go to perform ablution, and to drink at the fountain; and we went on board our vessel.

You know that idiots make their fortunes in Mahomedan countries, or at least live very much at their ease, without being obliged to work for their bread. In one corner of the coffeehouse was a negro woman sitting upon a mat, naked,
or

or at least nearly so; she was very old, and frightfully ugly, but of this she was not sensible: she swallowed every thing offered to her, even tobacco, which shewed that she had really lost that reason which the gods, says an ancient, gave us in a fit of anger. She had no cares, however, and but few wants, which were even anticipated by the humanity of her protectors. She had been supported by the piety of true believers ever since she was ten years of age. I saw likewise a madman amusing himself with caning the Janissaries in the street. This respect of the Mussulmen for maniacs often extends even to adoration. On this occasion I shall relate to you a story from the *Bibliothèque Orientale* of Herbelot.—A caliph of Bagdad, having heard that there was a madman who pretended to be the Deity, ordered him to be brought before him, to examine whether he was really insane or an impostor. For this purpose he thus addressed him: A few days ago a man was brought before me, charged with counterfeiting insanity, and wishing to pass as an envoy from heaven: I committed him to prison; and the consequence was, that he was tried, and condemned to lose his head. The fool immediately replied: You acted as one of my good and faithful servants: your conduct is to me highly agreeable; for I did not bestow the gift of prophecy on that wretch, nor did he receive any mission from me. On hearing this, the caliph was almost ready to fall down on his knees and adore him, for the Turks believe that such people are inspired by the Spirit of God. This idea may lay claim
to

to the sanction of antiquity, and is to be met with, at least to a certain degree, even in polished societies, as well as among savage tribes. Does this arise from an idea that the loss of reason is to be accounted a happiness reserved alone for the favourites of heaven? or do the Turks think that these people resemble those gods, who, according to the Pagan mythology, were not remarkable for their wisdom?

L E T T E R X.

Salonica, June 1788.

THIS town is situated close to the end of a gulf, and terminates on the declivity of a mountain: it is flanked by two old ruinous castles on the side next the sea, and by two others towards the land. It is from five to six miles in circumference, and is surrounded by a pretty strong wall. The houses are of wood painted red, and edged towards the roof with black: on the corners of them there is frequently a verse of the Koran, or some scrap of poetry written in gilt letters. They are decorated with terraces; and the courts are often ornamented with cypress-trees, which the Turks, who are of a melancholy turn, greatly delight in. The principal part of the streets, on account of the heat of the sun, are covered with wood, which does not tend to make them more wholesome, as it prevents a proper circulation of air. Others swarm with sparrows, doves, crows, ravens, and storks, and also with dogs and cats. No one dare molest these animals; for the Turks, though they do not, like the Egyptians, exalt them into deities, would, like them, consider the person who injures them as a murderer, and treat him accordingly.

G

ingly. The shops are fastened with small bolts; for, thanks to the influence of religion! there are here no thieves. The surrounding country is well cultivated, and abounds with partridges, hares, pheasants, hedgehogs, and a great number of tortoises.

The inhabitants of this place are computed at 80,000: the Jews, who have several synagogues here, amount to 23,000; the Greeks and Franks to 20,000; and the remainder are Turks. The Greeks and Latins have their respective churches, in which they may pray as much as they please without fear of molestation. The streets in which the Jews live, may be known by their stench. The Jewesses are in general dirty; some of them may be seen, especially on Saturdays, who are handsome, clean, and well dressed. As we were going out of the Jewish quarter, the children came in crowds to ask us for *paras*, to which they were encouraged by their mothers, with a view probably of inspiring them with an early taste for the property of others. The Jews however do not meet here with the best of treatment. If a Turk has occasion for the service of a Jew, he seldom fails to honour him with the epithet of pimp or cuckold, or with some other title equally respectable. The Jews, it is true, are not much affected by contempt, and even bad treatment, provided they are well paid. They are the principal venders of provisions, and in this business acquit themselves with much ability; they exercise the functions also of boatmen, porters, usurers, brokers, &c.

The

The country is governed in regard to criminal matters by a *Mollah*, a name which denotes a *Cadi* or judge of superior rank. The police is under the inspection of a *Pacha*, a title given only to viziers and governors; and in his absence it is directed by the *Mouffelin*. These offices are bought, or obtained by interest. The government, properly speaking, is in the hands of the Janissaries, who act here like petty despots. Some of them, when in a state of intoxication, have, merely to gratify their sanguinary disposition, or in order to try their powder, shot a Greek or a Jew. Others of them commit the like enormities through treachery, and in cold blood.

The principal articles of commerce here are cotton and wool, which, when manufactured into stuffs, are sold by the Franks for three times the value of the raw materials: leather, carpets, and tobacco for smoking, which is used throughout all the Levant.

The burial-places are out of town, near the sea-shore. At the end of each grave two large stones are fixed in the earth. Those of people of distinction are of marble; and on one of them is cut out the turban peculiar to the rank of the deceased. Close to the side of some of these stones young cypress-trees are planted. Near such burial-places I saw fountains, where in a sort of niche was deposited a wooden cup for the convenience of persons desirous of quenching their thirst.

In the upper part of the town, are the tombs of those who

have fallen victims to the plague. Whilst we were walking there, indulging in vain and melancholy reflections on the numberless calamities which afflict mankind, some Turkish children amused themselves in throwing stones at us with a sling, to which they added other compliments usually bestowed on the Franks, calling us *ghiaour*, that is to say, infidels. They would have continued this diversion, which to us was not very agreeable, as we were descending into a valley where they would have never missed us, had not a venerable old man, who fortunately for us was *destined* to pass that way, prevented them.

On our return to the town we met a pretty Turkish girl about fifteen or sixteen years old. Her eyes, the only part of her which we could see, were the finest I ever beheld. When we approached close to her, one of our company was so imprudent as to make signs to her, which is here the most effectual way to get assassinated. A boy who accompanied her, at this lost all patience; looked at us fiercely, though it was with the fierceness of a child, and, laying his hand on his little dagger, said something to us in a menacing tone, which, as we were unacquainted with his language, we did not understand. As we were not desirous that other Turks should come up to explain it to us, we turned down another street.

While we were here a Frank killed a Turk, and took refuge on board our ship. These two people, who were intimate

timate friends, had been dining together, notwithstanding their difference of religion; and the Frank taking up the other's pistol, it went off by accident, and dispatched his unfortunate companion. The poor wretch was so affected at this misfortune, that he was immediately taken ill, and it is more than probable that it may occasion his death.

L E T.

L E T T E R X I.

Salonica, June 1788.

FOR some days after our arrival here the weather was extremely cold, but at present the heat is insupportable. The putrid fever, which rages in the country at this time of the year, has already begun to make its appearance. Some of our sailors have caught it, and this has determined us to depart hence immediately.

There are two English frigates now lying in the port, which gives some umbrage to the Turks, whom war and the rigours of fasting render suspicious. They say it is a long time since any men of war were seen here. "Last month," say they, "we were visited by two French ships, and now two English ones have arrived. This, in time of war, does not look well." Some of them in fact are so much dissatisfied at this circumstance, that I yesterday observed a Turk flourish his sabre in the air, on seeing two officers pass his shop, as if he meant to have cut off the heads of these infidels. He did this, it is true, when he was pretty certain he could exhibit his bravado with impunity, that is to say, after the officers had gone by.

This

This town, to which Cicero was banished at the instigation of the rapacious Verres, still contains some remains of antiquity, both sacred and profane. In the mosque of S. Sophia is to be seen an antique green pulpit, in which, according to tradition, St. Paul preached to the Thessalonians. The Turks hold this relic, from which was inculcated a religion different from that of the true believers, in great veneration. This mosque was formerly a Greek church, and is pretty well built: but that of S. Dimitri is superior in this respect, for it contains some beautiful columns of ancient red and green granite. At some little distance is an amphitheatre half buried in the earth, and ornamented with bas-reliefs. In another place is the portico of an ancient temple, the columns and figures of which are much mutilated: many of the latter possess considerable merit, particularly a Leda. In many streets may be seen chapiters, columns, and stones of marble, with Greek inscriptions, which the Turks have employed in the construction and embellishment of their fountains.

I went to see the Caloyer monks, in order to learn if there are really any manuscripts concerning mount Athos, and of what antiquity they are; but I found these poor wretches so ignorant that they scarcely understood the modern Greek, and so indigent that they were under the necessity of labouring to gain a subsistence. The dervises or Turkish monks, who, to present the more ridiculous scene to a foreigner, are always

ways to be found in company with the Greek ones, are not so miserable. I saw two of them walking together, who in their dress very much resembled the *Cordeliers*. The elder wore a large cap; the younger had a smaller and shorter one; and as he discovered more folly than his companion, he was thought to be more divinely inspired, and consequently was more respected.

The Mahomedan Lent not laying any restraint upon the sense of sight, we were every day visited by numbers of Turks who came to view our vessel. They admired every thing they saw, and devoutly killed time by continually counting their rosaries: the beads of those worn by the Turkish *petits-maitres* are of transparent stones; and they are suspended from the girdle by small silver chains. They have gold watches, and the hilts and scabbards of their sabres are covered with silver of curious workmanship. Some Greek country girls, very singularly dressed, came likewise to see us. Over a woollen robe with a white ground intermixed with several glaring colours, they wore a sort of loose gown without sleeves, of the same stuff, which in part covered the bosom, the rest of which was half concealed by a necklace of Turkish coins, intermixed with antique medals; their hair, interwoven with flowers, hung loosely over their shoulders. They formed a circular dance round a musician, who, with his lute, modulated a tune suited to their steps, and sung divers couplets, which they repeated after him.

Consuls

Consuls from France, England, Venice, Ragusa, and Naples reside here. The English and French engross the chief trade. Naples sends no ships to this port.

The amusements of the Franks consist in fishing, hunting, and billiards. In winter they have balls, especially during the time of the Carnival; but always under that restraint which the ferocity of the Turks and the despotism of the Janissaries inspire. The greater part of them therefore stay here only in the hope of being able to return to their own country with a sufficient fortune to live at their ease.

I shall conclude by remarking, after Strabo, that the Thes-salians, who inhabited this country, were the first who made use of long robes to defend themselves from the cold, in imitation of those people situated to the north of Greece: this custom afterwards became common throughout that country, and even among people who, living under a warm climate, ought rather to have worn as little dress as possible.

L E T T E R XII.

Sciato, June 23, 1788.

WE have just now come to anchor in a very fine port to the east of this island. The village has been built only four years; it is therefore very small, and contains no more than 200 inhabitants. The women, though certain of not incurring the fate of Helen, fled at our approach: I, however, saw some among them whose features were sweet and regular; and whose looks were animated and interesting. The people are very affable; they have only one church, one *papas* or priest, who now and then says mass; and not a single Turk is to be found among them. The *papas* can read fluently, which in this country passes for a sign of great erudition; he confesses, communicates, and sometimes excommunicates—but he never preaches: and in this he does right; for, being as little acquainted with that art as any of his brethren, he would only weary them to no purpose. Behind the sanctuary of the church, is a pedestal with an ancient inscription.

You will no doubt scarcely believe me when I assure you that the fine arts are cultivated in this place. There is a painter

painter here; but it is needless to add that he is not an Apelles. The principal necessaries of life, which are not very plentiful, are imported from Salonica and Smyrna: there is here however abundance of tobacco and brandy. Fruit-trees are rare; but the island produces corn and wine, which the inhabitants keep in casks bedawbed with resin, as do likewise those of the neighbouring island of Scopelo, where it is in great plenty. It keeps well in this manner, but it contracts a most disagreeable flavour. Honey is likewise procured here: it smells strongly of thyme, and is very cheap. Game is scarce, consisting only of a few pigeons and partridges: we were not lucky enough to kill any; but we were in some measure indemnified for this loss by the affability of a shepherd who made us a present of a pail of milk, for which he would not accept any thing. On our return from shooting, we went to rest ourselves at the tavern, where we dined on a large lamb roasted on a wooden spit, which, like the heroes of Homer, we prepared ourselves. Whilst we were enjoying our repast, which was not the less delicious for its simplicity, the peasants brought us some copper medals, for the most part collected from the neighbouring islands of Peparethos, Scopelo, &c. and some from Chalcis and Istria, ancient cities in Eubœa, &c. A person here is commissioned to buy all these medals, and to send them to the French consul at Salonica, who has a fine collection.

A Greek, who called himself a physician, came on board of us yesterday; he praised every thing, and flattered every
H 2 body.

body. Speaking to his companion of me, he said I was an angel, and this with a very serious air. The reason was, that he wanted a French book, having lately learned that language: though his flattery had completely disgusted us, I gratified his wishes. On this occasion Juvenal occurred to my mind; I thought of one of those people whom he describes when he says,

—Adulandi gens prudentissima, laudat
Sermonem indocti, faciem deformis amici.

The hills of this island are covered with holy thistle, centaury, thyme, sage, and calamint, which at sun-set perfume the air, and render the nights extremely delightful.

To-day the south-east wind was so hot, that we expected to have been stifled. We are told that this wind occasions putrid fevers; and on that account our stay here will not be long.

L E T T E R XIII.

Zea, June 28, 1788.

THIS island, which is twenty miles in circumference, and has a fine port sheltered on every side from the wind, was the country of Simonides, the philosophical poet, of whom Pindar was the disciple, and of the peripatetic philosopher Aristo. The village is situated on an eminence three miles from the sea, and perhaps on the same spot where formerly stood Cartea, one of the two ancient towns of the island. The other, Corissia, was probably on the way to this village; and the brook that runs along the side of the road, was undoubtedly the Eliffa, by which it was watered. Here Nestor, on his return from the Trojan war, built the temple of Pallas Nedusia. Strabo, when relating this in his tenth book, makes mention likewise of a law of the island, by which it was enacted, that every person who exceeded the age of sixty should be poisoned. On this occasion, he quotes the words of Menander, whence it may be inferred that the above law met with his approbation. "What a wise law, O Phania, is that of the Ceans! to take life from those who are no longer

“longer capable of enjoying it!” It is very probable that the magistrates of this island might have been affected with the *spleen*.

The inhabitants of this island, who are all Greeks, governed by their own magistrates, amount to about 5000. There are forty papas, and seven or eight convents of monks. Crimes are not frequent here, and seldom extend beyond petty larceny. The people manufacture wool, of which they make cloth sufficient for their own use. The water of this village, which is considered as the best in the islands, is of a very diuretic quality. Plenty of red wine is to be met with here, and may be purchased on very reasonable terms. Great part of it, both in colour and taste, might pass for Burgundy; and some merchants, it is said, sell it for such at Constantinople. This wine is so delicate that it will not keep long; at the end of three months it is good for nothing. The grapes from which it is produced, are exposed to the sun for eight or ten days. Less pains are taken with the common wine, as the grapes intended for making it are dried only three or four days. Great quantities of barley, silk, gall-nuts, and wine, are exported from this island. Game is in great abundance; for, without the assistance of dogs, we killed an immense number of partridges.

There is an English vice-consul in the village, who officiates in the same capacity to other nations. He came on board our vessel, accompanied by his daughters, one of whom appeared to be a young lady of great talents; that is to say,
she

she talked a great deal more than her sisters, who paid much deference to her, because she had travelled. She boasted so highly of this advantage, that it excited a curiosity in us to enquire where she had been: but we could not help laughing when she told us seriously that she had been at Athens.

As to medals, none are found here but after heavy rains; and as these were all bespoke for the English ambassador at Constantinople, we could not procure any of them.

On both sides the valley, which leads to the village, there are gardens, which the Greeks cultivate as well as they can.

We entered one of them with our captain; and such was its luxuriance, that we were obliged to be careful of our steps, for fear of treading under foot the productions with which the ground was covered, and to stoop continually to avoid doing injury to the fruits and blossoms above our heads. So great was the profusion of apples, pears, plums, mulberries, apricots, and ripe lemons, which last diffused a delightful odour through the air, that they seemed all to grow upon the same tree. We tasted them all: and we found some black mulberries of a prodigious size, which were peculiarly excellent. The gardener, whose agreeable countenance increased the respectability of age, not satisfied with giving us the range of the garden, treated us with a basket of the choicest fruits he could gather, and begged us to carry them on board with us; and it was with the utmost difficulty that we could prevail on him to accept a little money in return. He introduced us to his two daughters, whose only ornaments were innocence and
beauty;

beauty ; for the simple gowns they wore did not quite cover their bosoms, and exposed their naked legs : a sweet blush, which enhanced their beauty, overspread their cheeks when they saw every eye fixed upon them. The father assured us, that, poor as he was, he valued these two treasures beyond all the riches in the world : he thanked Heaven, he said, for blessing him with them, while his only prayer was to breathe his last in their arms. This amiable family exhibited, in all its charms, the picture of a country life, which alone perhaps admits of those pure joys to which ambition is a stranger. How sweet in these moments was the recollection of the old man's discourse to Erminia !

We are going to set sail ; for the disadvantage of this port is, that a vessel cannot get out of it with a north wind : on this account one was detained here last year two months.

L E T-

LETTER XIV.

Athens, July 14, 1788.

WE landed at *Porto Rafti*, the ancient *Panormum*, and came hither by land. In our voyage from *Zea*, we saw nothing remarkable, except Long Island, which is only a little way from it. This island, in which Paris tasted the first fruits of his conquest, is at present barren and desolate. Near *Porto Rafti* is a small village, the inhabitants of which are extremely poor. The papas even feel the effects of the general misery, being obliged to labour for their living like the meanest of their flock: one of them, from whom we hired asses, followed us on foot from the harbour to the village. He wished, as I imagine, by imposing on us, to indemnify himself in some measure for the extortions of the Turks, as he demanded much more than his due for the hire of his animals. This induced the English consul, resident at Athens, who was with us, to ask him if he was not ashamed to make such a charge, and to tell him that he wanted some Turks to deal with. This poor wretch, though a papas, received a month ago a hundred strokes on the soles of his feet. He was ac-

I

cused

cused by some of his countrymen with having supplied provisions to a Russian man of war, which appeared one evening for a few moments in the port. The fact is, that this vessel was a French frigate; but, as he neither knew nor could prove that circumstance, he was obliged to submit to the punishment.

We met with nothing remarkable on the road, except a superb lion couchant, in marble, which the aga bestows on the public, but which some one less generous will probably one day convert into private property. The country is almost depopulated, and presents to the view nothing but brambles and thorns. In all this space there are but two or three small villages. It is only in the environs of Athens that agriculture is again perceptible. Olives grow here as formerly, and have lost nothing of their reputation. Those called *colymbades*, which the ancients pickled, and used to create an appetite, have not changed their name among the modern Greeks. They are still prepared in the same manner, and seem not to have lost their former quality. These olives are in great request throughout all the Levant,

LETTER XV.

Athens, July 1788.

EVER since my arrival here, my thoughts have been in a continual state of fluctuation, which may be better conceived than described. The reflection only of being in Athens excites so many interesting ideas, that the excess of pleasure I derive from them at certain intervals makes me think I am in a dream. What! do I now breathe the same air as Solon, Demosthenes, Pericles, and Socrates? This thought gives me new life; and my imagination is elevated to such a degree, that, soaring aloft, it spurns the boundaries of time, and carries me back to the age of these great men. I think I walk with them, and with the Athenian people, while every thing around me excites my astonishment. Sweet illusion! why must I not enjoy thee longer? Alas! already art thou vanished. These ruins but too plainly indicate that Athens is no more. The illusion ceases. I consider for a moment, and start back confounded at a chasm of 3000 years. I tread then under foot the ashes of so many illustrious Athenians! O heavens, why should great men be doomed to pay the debt of nature,

nature, in common with those who are a burden to the earth? Here reason and voluptuousness flowed from the mouth of the virtuous Epicurus! There the amiable Plato inculcated philosophy and virtue! Cruel Sylla, to deprive posterity of the sacred groves of the Academy, in which Aristotle, as he strayed, propounded the deepest questions of metaphysics and morality! Yonder was the Areopagus—here stood the Odeum. This entire temple is that of Theseus: it seems to have been built but yesterday. Around are the ruins of that of Minerva, of the Acropolis, and the Pantheon.

This place is still interesting, independently of its ruins, when considered as the theatre in which the most illustrious nation of antiquity performed their exploits; whose genius enlightened that of Rome, and for ever retained its superiority over her; and where heroism, the sciences and the arts reached the highest degree of perfection to which the human mind is capable of attaining. These ideas present to the imagination a succession of scenes ever new and ever pleasing: my heart is penetrated with them; it palpitates; a soft melancholy succeeds these ecstasies; I yield to the pleasing illusion, and indulge in my reveries till they at length vanish like “the baseless fabric of vision.”

LET-

LETTER XVI.

Athens, July 1788.

I WRITE to you from the house of the English consul, who is a Greek, and whose family are amiable. How much do we regret that we do not understand Greek! it is so painful to be incapable of replying to the numerous civilities with which his charming sisters load us. These ladies make a point of anticipating our wishes themselves, not admitting their servants to participate in this care. If they see us resting on a sofa, they carry their complaisance so far, as to cool us, and drive away the flies with a large fan made of feathers; and this they do likewise when we are at dinner. The youngest particularly seems to make it her chief study to render our situation agreeable. She is the housekeeper, and waits upon our servants even herself. Such amiable solicitude is no where to be met with, but in the posterity of that people anciently so renowned for hospitality.

Among other things they give us four milk and curds, which when mixed with sugar is very palatable. The Turks eat a great deal of this food, and call it *caimac*.

To-day

To-day is the Bayram, or Easter, of the Mussulmen : it was announced early in the morning by the firing of cannon ; and the Janissaries have stunned every body with their noisy music. They came to the consul's house to testify their joy, with a view of getting something to increase it. I still retain in my ears the sound of their hoarse timbals and shrill clarionets.

We have paid a visit to the aga, or commander of the fortrefs. He was in his harem : he at least sent a message to this purpose, in order that we might dance attendance for some time in what is called the antichamber : in about ten minutes he appeared : he is a handsome man, and, for a domestic, has a very genteel and noble air : he was in the service of the captain pacha, the Turkish admiral. He received us very politely, presenting us with coffee and sweetmeats, which we all tasted out of the same spoon. Some Turkish lords, and a fool whom he keeps for his amusement, were next served. This custom of keeping fools was formerly very much in vogue among the Europeans, and has been discontinued but very lately by our kings. This fool, who is very old and pale, like people of his character, was desired to counterfeit a philosopher : on which he trembled, became serious, then burst into a fit of laughter, and made a thousand contortions : the aga laughed, or rather smiled. We were then offered pipes, which we declined to accept. The aga, however, very seriously began smoking with a pipe of a very singular construction, called a hookah, which is much used in the Levant.

This

This pipe, which is about five feet in length, is made of brass wire, covered over with painted leather: it is terminated by a brass machine with two tubes, one of which is bent, and joins to its extremity: the other is perpendicular, and filled with tobacco. These two pipes afterwards unite in one; and being placed in a crystalline vessel not quite filled with water, the smoke, as it passes through, occasions the water to bubble, and, rising afterwards in clouds, is very refreshing: smoking in this manner is not only pleasant, but even delightful, especially when rose water, which many employ, is used for that purpose. The aga for our amusement entertained us with a concert, consisting of a cymbal, a flute, a mandora, and a paltry violin with three strings, accompanied by a voice still more disagreeable than all these instruments put together. While the Turks were rapt in ecstasy, our patience was almost exhausted; for even the pathetic appeared to us extremely monotonous and disagreeable.

This, however, might probably arise from our not being sensible of the variations; and because the music was in a style different from ours. A Frenchman, who is settled here, and who is very much attached to the Turkish customs, extols it to the skies. He says it is grave, noble, and majestic; that it is calculated to inspire courage; in a word, that it is the oriental music, which I do not mean to deny. We asked permission of the aga to see the citadel, or rather the celebrated monuments it contains; but he begged us to wait till three days of the Bayram were over, lest the Turks who go to walk there

there should insult us. This Bayram, indeed, has metamorphosed them in such a manner, that you would not know them again. They have thrown aside their usual gravity, and run about the streets in promiscuous crowds, without distinction of friend or foe, chatting, laughing, and amusing themselves.

Ever since our arrival, the consul's father and mother have constantly dined with us; for the society of strangers is deemed a sort of treat too valuable not to be made the most of. Our conversation is very agreeable; we talk, joke, and laugh at each other's jests, though they lose their point by passing through the mouth of an interpreter. These amiable people do not even quit us at night. Sophas, upon which beds are prepared, serve for the men: the women sleep in the same manner in another chamber. These sophas, which are placed in an alcove, and generally occupy three-fourths of the room, are for the most part surrounded with rails: they are covered in summer with striped cloth, imported from Russia or other countries; and in winter with damask, or crimson velvet, ornamented with gold fringe. They sit upon them in the Turkish manner, first leaving their slippers below the estrade.

The consul took me to see the *despot*, that is to say, the archbishop. We found him in dishabille, enjoying the fresh air in a summer-house at the bottom of his garden: though a devotee, he received us very politely. Some deacons, who stood while every body else sat down, on a signal from the despot, whose

whose domestics they are, served us with sweetmeats and coffee. My lord in the mean time occupied the first seat on the sofa, so that we were all placed on his left.

The principal men among the Greeks are dissatisfied with the cadi: there is a continual animosity between them; and this may perhaps arise from the ancient spirit of liberty which still flows in their veins. The cadi wishes to oppress them with impunity; and they on the other hand resist him with all their might. Though they detest him, they however still pay their court to him, and he in return hates them as heartily as they do him.

L E T T E R XVII.

Athens, July 1788.

WE have employed the whole of this day in viewing the superb ruins of Athens. In the *Acropolis*, or citadel, we beheld with admiration the vestibulum, which is magnificent. It was built by Pericles in the eighty-fifth Olympiad, to embellish the entrance into the citadel. It was completed in five years, at the expence of two thousand and twelve talents. Pausanias speaks in raptures of the dazzling whiteness of the marble, and of the size of the stones, some of which are twenty-two feet in length. This vestibulum is of the Doric order. It has five doors, which are twice as high as they are wide. The largest is twelve feet seven inches wide, the two next eight feet eight inches, and the two smallest are four feet four inches in width. After passing the vestibulum, the *Parthenon*, or temple of the Virgin, principally attracts notice. It was built by those celebrated artists, Callicrates and Ictinus, by order of Pericles, who dedicated it to Minerva. The first view of it is highly striking; for the beauty of the marble, and the majestic grandeur of the building, command the attention of the beholder.



B S B
MÜNCHEN

holder. It is of the Doric order; and its shape is a parallelogram, extending from east to west: it is two hundred and twenty-one feet long, and ninety-four broad. The exterior columns which surround it have no base; they are five feet eight inches in diameter, and thirty-two feet in height: in the circuit of this building there were formerly forty-six of these. Upon the frieze of these columns some considerable remains of bas-reliefs are still perceptible. Those of the *Metopes*, representing the battle of the Athenians against the Centaurs, are for the most part in good preservation. The statue of Minerva, which adorned the inside of the temple, was considered a master-piece of art. It was made of ivory and gold; and the ornaments alone weighed upwards of forty talents. It was more valuable, however, on account of its exquisite workmanship than its costly ornaments; for Phydias, in forming it, had even exceeded himself.

You next see two temples, separated only by a partition wall. They are supposed to be those of Neptune Erecteus, and of Minerva *Poliades*, or protectress of the town; the latter of which, among other curiosities, contained the folding seat of Dædalus, the inextinguishable lamp, and a valuable relic of the art of sculpture in its infancy, a wooden statue placed there by Cecrops, and which was still to be seen in the days of Pausanias. The famous olive tree which grew in this temple, having been burned by the Medes when they took Athens, is said to have budded afresh the same day to the height of two cubits. A traveller having obtained permission

of the aga to dig in the temple of Erechtheus, with a view to discover the well, the salt water of which, according to Pausanias, was agitated by the south wind like the waves of the sea, and on the rock of which Neptune caused his trident to be carved out, they dug up two beautiful columns of ancient green marble, which are trod under foot, no one being at the trouble to elevate them.

The *Pandrosea* is a small, but singular building, the entablature of which is supported by *canephores*, now entirely mutilated. From a passage in Pausanias, we have reason to presume that this monument was erected by the Athenians, in honour of those virgins who resided near the temple of Minerva Poliades, and who were consecrated to the service of that goddess. These virgins were called *canephores*, that is to say, basket-carriers, from a circumstance which occasioned them to be so employed during the festival of the goddess. The daughters of Cecrops, too, solicited this honour; but all except Pandora were so imprudent as to disobey the command of the goddess. The Athenians, therefore, erected a temple in honour of her, near that of Minerva Poliades: no vestiges of it are now to be seen.

At the foot of the citadel there are superb marble ruins, supposed to have belonged formerly to the temple of Bacchus, in which tragedies and comedies were performed. The theatre was decorated with the statues of Eschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, and Menander. M. Le Roi says, it subsisted in the days of Philip of Macedon.

Upon

Upon the hill which is to the south-east of the citadel, is the marble monument of Philopappus, a Roman consul. This hill was called Museus, from the poet of that name, who was a disciple of Orpheus, and who came hither to recite his verses; and, indeed, it has a double title to this appellation, as, according to Pausanias, it contained the sepulchre of that poet.

From this place we went to view the temple of Theseus, which is now at some distance from the town, though it formerly stood in the centre of it: it is almost entire, and built of the like marble, and in the same style of architecture as that of Minerva. The bas-reliefs of the frieze and the metopes represent the battles of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ, together with the principal actions of Theseus, and are for the most part in pretty good preservation. You will doubtless expect to hear that I found within the picture mentioned by Pausanias, and said to have been a representation of the combat of the Lapithæ and Centaurs, in which Theseus killed one of the latter. There are indeed pictures, but very grotesque ones. These sacred walls have been covered with the images of saints, which I scarcely deigned to look at. I stopped, however, to read some characters inscribed on them; but, to my great mortification, they contained only the names of some of those travellers, who in vain seek for that immortality which flees from them.

To the south-east of the Acropolis there are seventeen fluted columns of the Corinthian order, six feet in diameter,
and

and sixty feet high, which formed part of the pantheon built by Adrian. This pantheon contained one hundred and twenty columns, all of Phrygian marble; and the boxes were ornamented with the same. There were in it likewise apartments decorated with pictures and statues, and cieling covered with alabaster and gold. The temple contained the library and gymnasium of Adrian, in which were one hundred columns of African marble.

The Ilyffus, which usually washes the bottom of the Museus, is at present dry. We neither saw the Lyceum, nor the temple of the Illyssian Muses, which was situated on its banks; but we were delighted to find the fountain *Callirrhoe*, which has its source in the bed of this river, and still retains its ancient name. On the opposite shore we walked over the Stadium, the spot where the Panathenean games, that is to say, the races and public games of all Attica, were celebrated.

BSB
MÜNCHEN

BSB
MÜNCHEN



G. Porter. sculp.^t

at Athens.

BSB
MÜNCHEN



L E T T E R XVIII.

Athens, July 1788.

NEAR the hospital of the French Capuchins there is a singular marble building, with six fluted pillars of the Corinthian order. It is built in the form of a lantern; and the top is cut into scales, and terminates in a very whimsical ornament. It is called *to Fanari tou Demosthenis*, or the lantern of Demosthenes; as it is supposed that the orator shut himself up here, that he might the better study the difficult and divine art of eloquence. The bas-reliefs, however, on the frieze, which represent some of the actions of Hercules, seem to indicate that this monument belonged to that hero. It is now close to an hospital of monks; we may therefore say, that chance often brings the most contradictory things together.

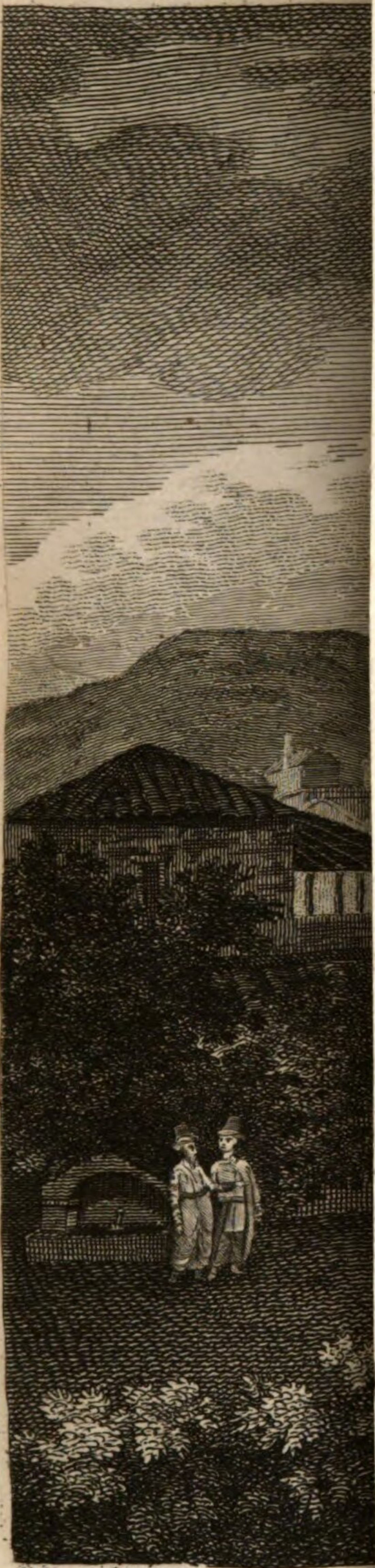
The tower *des Vento* is another curious edifice, constructed of marble, in an octagonal form. Andronicus Cyrrhestes, by whom, as Vitruvius informs us, it was built, engraved on each of its faces the figure of a wind blowing from that particular quarter: these figures have large wings, but their cheeks are not puffed up. On this tower there was a small pyramid, over which was a Triton of bronze, which, with a wand,

wand, pointed out the direction of the wind; the artist having contrived the figure in such a manner, that it shifted according to its variation. On each square was a sundial, some lines of which are still visible. This building serves at present as an asylum to some dervises.

Near the *bazar*, or market-place, are the remains of a famous temple of the Olympian Jupiter, which was half a mile in circumference. The columns are large and beautiful: they are fluted, and of the Corinthian order. In the vicinity of this temple was the tomb of Deucalion, and the hole through which the waters of the deluge subsided: a consecrated cake is every year thrown into it, in commemoration of this terrible event.

A little further stands the frontispiece of a temple, dedicated to Rome, and to Augustus, with fluted columns of the Doric order. To enumerate every thing here worthy of notice, would require long time; for, besides these principal monuments, there are the remains of several temples; and on all sides pillars, chapiters, inscriptions, and bas-reliefs, which the Greeks usually place at the top of their doors. M. Le Roi gives a very particular and satisfactory description of them. We have him constantly with us, as well as Spon, and Pausanias, who appears to us more interesting than either; for, by transporting us back to antiquity, he has enabled us to discover various monuments by the position of their ruins, whereas the rest serve only to deprive us of the pleasure of conjecture.

The



Stuart, delin.^t

BSB
MÜNCHEN

The ports of Athens are not now what they were formerly. *Phalerea*, which is almost three miles in circumference, has not a good bottom, and ships in it are obliged to keep at a great distance from each other. Munichia is now abandoned, because it has no proper anchoring-ground. It is a mile and a half from the port of Phalerea, and two from Piræum; but by land the distance is less. Near these ports there are ruins; but it is not known of what buildings they are the remains. The entrance into Piræum is so narrow, that two frigates cannot pass it abreast: it, however, has a good bottom, and is sheltered on all sides from the wind. It was capable of containing four hundred sail, according to Strabo; and one thousand, according to Pliny: a number which these writers, had they seen the size of our modern ships, would probably have considerably diminished. We in vain sought for the town of Piræum, its beautiful porticos, and the tomb of Themistocles. No traces whatever exist of those long walls which joined Athens to Phalerea and Piræum. The fields intersected by the road to the port, and which were called the *Street of Pyraeum*, instead of those superb buildings with which they were formerly embellished, present to the modern traveller only corn, olive-trees, and vineyards.

The heat is so intense, and has fatigued me to such a degree, that I am unable to accompany Mr. F—— to Eleusis. I remain, however, highly pleased at Athens; and the only inconvenience I suffer, in this pure and serene climate, is the regret which I feel at being obliged to leave it.

L

L E T.

L E T T E R X I X .

Athens, 1788.

THIS city had formerly thirteen gates, and was twenty-two Roman miles in circumference. It is probable that the Adrian arch conducted to that part of the town which was rebuilt by that emperor. Upon the portal is the following inscription: "This is the city of Adrian, and not of Theseus:" and on the side next the town, "This is Athens, which was the city of Theseus." The situation of this place, added to the magnificence of its buildings, which are almost all constructed of marble, must have rendered the view of it highly striking, especially on the sea-side and towards the entrance from Piræum. In the flat country, rendered fertile by the Ilissus and the Eridan, a rock rises between two hills, the Musæus and Mount Anchesme, on the summit of which Cecrops built the town of Cecropia, changed afterwards into a citadel, in the happy days of Athens. The Acropolis was embellished with the most beautiful monuments of art, amongst which the temple of Minerva arose superbly eminent, being then visible, as it is now, from every avenue that conducted to the city; while nothing was to be seen on all sides but temples, porticos, gymnasia, and

and theatres, containing an innumerable quantity of statues; for of these 3000 were remaining even in the days of Pliny.

The mountains Parnes and Pentelicus, the one celebrated for bears and wild boars, and the other for its quarries, from which marble was procured to build the temples of Athens, are situated at a little distance from the city, the one towards the north, and the other towards the east.

Mount Hymettus, which is a short league to the south-east, contained formerly mines of silver : the honey produced on it was held in great estimation ; and an ancient geographer remarks, that the best was to be met with near these mines. We purchased some of it which had the colour of gold. It will keep, it is said, a long time, and is in great request at Constantinople. This mountain was likewise famed for its quarries of statuary marble, as well as for its silphium and its thyme.

We were naturally induced, by the position of Cecropia, to enquire the reason why the ancients built their towns on eminences. Plato and Thucydides, I think, have both treated of this subject. It is probable that the recent recollection of some deluge first gave rise to this custom ; and when population increased, and this idea, together with the devastation it had occasioned in the world, became effaced by time, men descended into the plains. They may, however, have made choice of rising grounds, like the savages of modern times, with a view of defending themselves with more ease in case of an attack. Perhaps, too, they were induced by the former

motive to build their temples on the highest mountains; though, according to the remark of an ancient writer, they may have done this with a view of approaching nearer to the gods, in order that their prayers might be the better heard.

The population of Athens has undergone great changes. When the Egyptian Cecrops settled in Attica, a thousand years before the modern æra, and founded Cecropia, the number of its inhabitants amounted only to 20,000. The necessity of augmenting the strength of this rising colony, and of providing for its defence, caused the freedom of the city to be indiscriminately granted to all who settled in it. In time, this privilege being abolished, with that necessity which gave rise to it, the inhabitants of Athens, in the days of Pericles, were less numerous than in those of Cecrops: under the government of Demetrius Phalereus, there were 1000 more than under either. Besides these, however, there were 10,000 foreigners, and 400,000 slaves. The latter cultivated the lands, contributed to the amusement of the people, and were employed in the lowest and most servile offices. Athens, at present, contains no more than 12,000 inhabitants, including the Turks, the number of whom is very small indeed. The lands are now tilled by Greeks, who perform all kinds of labour, pay taxes to these Turks, contribute to their amusement, and meet with nothing in return but oppression and harsh treatment.

The revolutions which have happened in the government of this place, are no otherwise important than as they serve to shew the influence which they successively had on the character

character of the Athenians, as well as the glorious epoch when they were great in every respect. You, who read history, are not to learn, that Athens was at first governed by kings, then by the people, afterwards by the four hundred, then by the thirty tyrants, and then again by the people; after which it fell into the hands of the Romans: nor is it necessary for me to inform you, that it was only while the republican form of government existed among them, that these people excited the admiration and astonishment of the world. Some declaimers inveigh bitterly against Pericles, for having, as they say, encouraged the fine arts with no other view than to ruin the republic; and this calumny has been further propagated by many, whose talents qualify them only to repeat the thoughts of others. This taste for elegance, however, having previously existed among the Athenians, Pericles, by encouraging it, did, in fact, no more follow the natural bent of his own genius, while he cultivated that of others: and what crime was there in this? Such things are formed, and develop themselves, like the diamond in the bowels of the earth. Besides, I leave to those better acquainted with the subject, to decide what connection there is between the ruin of a country and encouragement given to the fine arts. But, as additional reasons to prove that the Athenians were a degenerated people, they are represented as having been immersed in luxury; and the number of their feasts and courtesans is mentioned as a proof of this assertion. To these courtesans, however, Greece was indebted for the master-pieces of its sculptors and painters, as
were

were its philosophers and men of letters, for the mildness of their morals, and the elegance of their manners. Socrates, it is well known, was polished by Aspasia; and Pericles, charmed by wit, made her his mistress. Archeanassa of Colophon was beloved by the divine Plato, who even wrote verses in her praise; and the tragedian Sophocles, tragic as he was, fell in love in his old age with the courtesan Theorida. Leontium conversed publicly with Epicurus in his gardens. Lais was at the same time the friend of the philosopher Aristippus, the orator Demosthenes, and the cynic Diogenes. She was so finely proportioned, that the painters, when they wished to represent a beautiful bosom, always took hers for a model. Phryne furnished Apelles with a model of Venus rising from the sea, when, during the Cereales and festival of Neptune, in the face of all Greece, she loosened her golden hair and purple robe upon the beach. It was during his connection with Gnide that Praxiteles executed his celebrated Venus of that name; and such was his regard for this courtesan, that he offered her the choice of a satyr, or a most superb cupid, with a curious inscription on it, expressive of the sculptor's regard for her; but she made choice of the latter, and conveyed it to Thespis, her native country. Two circumstances respecting Phryne evidently shew, that in those days the profession of a courtesan, to which fate condemns so great a number of the fair sex, was not branded with the same infamy as it is at present; and that these women amassed immense and almost
incredible

incredible fortunes. The first is, that a golden statue of Phryne, executed by Praxiteles, was erected at Delphos, on a pillar of Penthelican marble. It was placed between Archidamus king of Sparta and Philip Amyntas, with this inscription: "*Phryne of Thespis.*" This occasioned the cynic philosopher Crates to say, "*Behold the fruits of Grecian intemperance!*" The other is, that Phryne offered to rebuild the walls of Thebes, on condition that they should bear the following inscription: "*Phryne rebuilt these walls which Alexander destroyed.*" These women were beheld in so favourable a light, that their lives and bons mots were recorded; for wit constituted a part of their profession. Aristophanes of Byzantium reckoned upwards of one hundred and thirty in Athens: Apollodorus and Gorgias make them amount to a still greater number; and Athenæus enumerates those whom these authors had omitted, and relates some of their repartees. It was perhaps on account of their beauty that the Greeks were so indulgent towards them; for beauty was held in high estimation, as the following anecdote sufficiently shews: Two women were proposed in marriage to Archidamus of Sparta, the one beautiful and poor, the other ugly but rich. As the love of money is as old as the world, Archidamus thought proper to make choice of the latter. This conduct was blamed by the Ephori, who condemned the king to a censure, "*because he thought rather of giving them puny kings than kings.*"

In regard to the luxury with which the Athenians are reproached,

proached, as being the occasion of their ruin, I know not what to say. One thing is certain, that these reproaches are very ancient ; for every age has produced snarling cynics, who, because they themselves are incapable of relishing the enjoyments of this life, are out of humour with every thing. The following is the defence made by an ancient in Athenæus to this charge : “ It is the peculiar privilege of freemen, to indulge in voluptuousness and pleasure ; for, by these means, the mind is refreshed and expanded. Labour is the province of wretches and slaves ; and it tends to contract and debase the soul. Luxury prevailed in Athens ; but those who addicted themselves to it, were the same who conquered at the battle of Marathon, and defeated the innumerable armies of Asia.”

As the corruption of the Athenian character, however, is never mentioned without contrasting it with that of the Spartans, to which it is constantly opposed, it may not be amiss to compare the respective excellencies of these two people, in order to determine to which the preference belongs. The Spartans despised riches, were temperate and frugal from habit, loved glory and their country, were obedient to the laws, and possessed the most heroic courage : but these people condemned deformed or puny children to death, on the idea that they could never make good soldiers ; and as if it had been impossible for them to be useful in counsel, or in any other manner : they likewise treated their slaves barbarously, and were insensible to modesty, filial tenderness,

ness, &c. The Athenians denied themselves no pleasure; they paid the same attention to a feast, or a play, as to their religious mysteries, or public assemblies; they were mild and humane; hospitable as well as generous, sensible and ingenious, amiable, industrious, and brave; for, to mention only one instance of their valour, it was this people that delivered Greece from the slavery of Xerxes. They, indeed, had their vices; for, in this world, there is no good without its concomitant evil: but, in my opinion, these vices were not only more tolerable than those of the Spartans, but even preferable to the virtue of the latter, which in other words was brutality. Should you still continue sceptical on this point, consult Thucydides, who has drawn a very favourable portrait of the Athenians, which is the less to be suspected of partiality, as it was sketched out by a Lacedemonian.

L E T T E R XX.

Athens, 1788.

IN reading history, nothing has struck me more than the readiness with which the ancients, and especially the vulgar, adopted a certain opinion respecting the origin of man. They in general believed, that man, like plants, was produced by a strange prolific effort of our common mother the earth, whose children they called themselves. As every thing however is subject to change, this opinion afterwards gave place to others as well founded, and which have obtained equal credit. The Athenians, infected with this universal folly, styled themselves contemporaries with the sun; and affirmed, that they sprung from the bosom of that earth which they inhabited. For this reason, they wore in early times, according to Thucydides, golden grasshoppers in their hair, from a belief that the earth gave birth to these insects.

The religion too of the Athenians, and of the Greeks in general, was of a very singular nature. These ingenious people, whose imagination spurned the boundaries of nature, deified every thing, and by these means multiplied the brilliant phantoms of mythology. Without this happy eccentricity
of

of the human mind, the fine arts would probably have been neglected by the Greeks, and we should consequently have sustained an irreparable loss; for, if we have attained to any degree of perfection in these pursuits, we are undoubtedly indebted for it to them.

What I consider as the most amiable feature in polytheism, and what in my opinion should induce us to view it with the more indulgence, is, that while it flattered the imagination, without alarming the heart, it inspired the most liberal toleration. In the days of Hesiod, the Athenians had upwards of 30,000 gods: they even then thought, however, that they had not a sufficient number; for, after having admitted among their deities those of every other nation, they erected, in the vicinity of Phalera, a temple to THE UNKNOWN GODS. St. Paul was desirous of establishing the Christian religion in Athens; and it would doubtless have been tolerated there, had it been previously admitted and approved by the Areopagus. For this reason, he was cited to appear before the council to explain to them his doctrine: and, though he did not entirely gain his point, he made some proselytes, notwithstanding the insipid sarcasms thrown out against him by the philosophers. I am at a loss to account, however, for his beginning his address in these terms: "Athenians, you have erected a temple TO THE UNKNOWN GOD: *it is that God whose missionary I am.* The temple was dedicated to the Gods; which destroys the happiness of the allusion.

Even revelation itself has been unable to extinguish, in the modern Greeks, that powerful propensity towards superstition which so eminently distinguished their ancestors. It is true, that, as every thing has degenerated among them, they have nothing now to set in competition with the Saturnalia and Cerealia, and those numerous other festivals of old, no less grateful to the mind than to the heart. Yet the ancient toleration being left out of the question, they still retain many superstitious rites and ceremonies, which bear some affinity to those of antiquity. What they may boast as exclusively their own, are frequent Lents and confessions, their paying paras for absolution, and damning all those who are not of the same religion as themselves; and especially the Latins and the Pope, whom they solemnly excommunicate once a year. To the temples of Theseus and Minerva have succeeded those of St. George and Panagia, whom they respect very much; though they are not a little discontented, if they do not grant them whatever they ask. During the festivals dedicated to these saints, the ancient Bacchanalia are revived; for their sole occupation then consists in singing, dancing, feasting, and praying. They pay the Turks a tax, which perhaps is more galling to them than the loss of their liberty, for permission to enjoy themselves without restraint during this season.

They believe in apparitions: and the priests, who do not, leave them in quiet possession of an opinion not unfriendly
to

to their own interests. Their ceremonies respecting the dead are too singular and curious to be omitted. They wash the body previous to interment. If it be a young girl, they crown it with a garland of flowers, and dress it in her best clothes. Mourners are appointed, whose office it is to pronounce an eulogium on the deceased; while the relations, dissolved in tears, express their grief by rending their clothes and tearing their hair: they even go so far as to deny themselves rest and food for some days. The ceremony is finished by a repast, which the nearest relation is obliged to give. This custom is very ancient, as may be seen by the following passage of Lucian, who treats the subject with such liveliness of description as is calculated to dispel unnecessary sorrow. “They
“ put a piece of money into the mouth of the deceased to
“ pay the boatman, without considering whether it be coin
“ current in the country he is going to: besides, I should
“ think it better not to give any thing, that Charon might
“ be obliged to send him back again. Their next care is to
“ wash the body—as though there were no water to be had
“ below, or that the person going was on his arrival to assist
“ at a festival: besides this, they perfume the body, crown
“ it with flowers, and dress it in rich apparel, for the purpose,
“ I suppose, that it may not catch cold on the road; or lest,
“ when it comes to its journey’s end, it should not be treated
“ with the respect due to its rank. All this is accompanied
“ with sobbing and tears, lamentations and regret, in order
“ to

“ to keep time to a master of the ceremonies, who presides
“ on the occasion ; and who enumerates past miseries in a
“ melancholy strain, with a view to extort tears from his
“ audience, should they be unable to shed any without this
“ contrivance. Some of them begin to tear their hair, and
“ others to beat their breasts, or scratch their faces. Others
“ again rend their clothes, and put dust upon their heads, and
“ throw themselves on the earth, or dash themselves against
“ the walls ; so that the dead man seems to be the happiest
“ of the whole group ; for whilst his friends and relations
“ are thus tormenting themselves, he is placed aloft, washed,
“ cleaned, perfumed, and crowned, as if he were going on
“ a visit. His father or mother, if he has any, then embrace
“ each other, with such ridiculous lamentations, that, were
“ he capable of perception, he would be ready to burst with
“ laughter.” You may find the rest in the chapter on
mourning.

In returning towards the ship, we met on the road a respectable old man, who was smoking, and enjoying the fresh air under a tree. We took him for a shepherd belonging to some flocks in the neighbourhood : but in this we were greatly mistaken ; he was no less a man than the aga's brother, and chief of a little village near which we had just passed. The excessive heat, added to the need which we had of some refreshment, obliged us here to halt ; and though we were provided with provisions, the consul treated us with a pail of milk.

milk. We made a most delicious meal; but the old man would not partake of it, and even refused to taste the wine which we offered him, though we were told he was no enemy to this liquor. The kind of saddle and stirrup made use of in this country is so inconvenient, and had fatigued me so much, that, at my arrival at Porto-Rafti, I found myself incapable of accompanying some of our gentlemen to Marathon.

L E T T E R XXI.

Smyrna, August 1788.

MIDSUMMER being over, the plague has now ceased; for this kind of putrid fever loses its malignancy as the intense heat of the season decreases. The Greeks have now forgotten that this contagion exercised its fury amongst them, as one may say, only a moment ago; that it tore from their affectionate arms their friends and relations; that their own lives were divided between the despair excited by these losses, and the constant apprehension of falling victims themselves to a similar fate. They are now in high spirits: they dance, sing, and play, and think only of enjoying the pleasures of life; in which they do right. In the evening the air resounds with the harmony of their voices attuned to musical instruments, so that one would imagine their days pass in a continual round of feasting and merriment.

This town is situated at the foot of a hill, on the extremity of the gulf. The principal part of it, as in the days of Strabo, is built on a mountain, the other on the banks of the sea. This geographer represents it as being formerly the most beautiful city in Asia; and it is still entitled to the same distinction.

tion. The houses, like those throughout all Turkey, are constructed of wood, painted of different colours, and are generally only one story high. Those situated along the port, and inhabited by the Turks, are extremely pretty. They have *kiokhes*, or beautiful terraces, where the inhabitants meet every evening to enjoy the cool air. The moments they spend in these places are most delightful. For my part, I am in raptures with them. Lost in an ecstatic reverie, every present and past crowds forward to enchant the imagination. The structure of the houses; the dress of the ladies, their deportment, voice, figure, and even language, which I regret that I am not acquainted with; the purity and serenity of the atmosphere; the various national standards flying in the port; those distant views, in which earth and sky are brought together; but above all the *Meles*, a little rivulet at the end of the *rue des Francs*, on whose banks the prince of poets was born—that painter of nature, who still charms us by his immortal pictures—all these together form to me a scene inexpressibly delightful.

The centre of the town is inhabited by Armenians and Jews; and the upper part by the Turks, whose houses are here and there shaded by tall cypresses. On the gate of the old castle, which commands the place, and which was built by the Genoese, is a Greek inscription not now legible. A colossal head is to be seen, sunk into the wall; said, but I will not vouch for the truth of it, to be that of the amazon Smyrna.

N

A little

A little way in the country are the ruins of some ancient walls, called the bath of Diana.

The *befesteins* are large square buildings constructed of free stone, with brick vaults for cielings. They were erected to preserve the merchandise from fire; or from pillage, in case of a revolt. They contain a great number of warehouses and shops, filled with gold and silver stuffs, muslin, silk, cotton, goat-skins, carpets, furs, and even precious stones. Every *befestein* contains one sort of goods: the gates of them are shut before sun-set, and are never opened during the Bayram. These buildings deserve attention, less on account of the infinite variety of merchandise which they contain, than of the diversity of people who resort to them. Jews, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Catholics, and Protestants, flock together with one common design, it is true, of over-reaching one another; but with a spirit of toleration the more extraordinary, as their religions are the less calculated to inspire it.

The streets are very narrow and dirty. In some of them it is possible to step from the windows of one house into those of the opposite one. That of the Franks is pretty wide; but there is one in the Turkish district which is considerably wider. The number of inhabitants is estimated at 130,000. Of these there are 26,000 Greeks, 7 or 8,000 Armenians, 10,000 Jews, 4 or 5,000 Franks, and the Turks make up the remainder. The first of these are rajas, or tributaries to the grand seignor, who are dependent on his tribunals.

tribunals. The Franks here, as throughout all Turkey, acknowledge only their own consuls. The country is governed by a *cadi*, who has under his command the *mouffelin*, or lieutenant of police, and the captain of the janissaries. The *cadi* is a judge, who determines points of law and religion; but when these are doubtful they are referred to the *mufti*. As these offices are usually obtained either by money or intrigue, and are seldom the reward of merit, it often happens that the *cadi* and the *mouffelin*, instead of governing a country, think only of ruining it. The following passage in Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* seems to confirm the truth of this observation: "A doctor, having been made *cadi* of a town, hired lodgings, when he first entered on his office, at the house of the *mouffelin* his lieutenant. This man gave him during his stay the best reception in his power; and treated him in every respect as a subaltern would do his superior: but being as yet ignorant of his name, he very civilly asked him what it was. The *cadi* answered, I have the character of being a terrible fellow here, where I have exercised the office of *cadi*; and am therefore known by the name of the *azrael* *cadi* (*Azrael* is the name of the angel of death, who, according to the oriental writings, separates the soul from the body). The lieutenant, on hearing this tremendous title, said, And as for me, I am called here *scheitan*, or *the devil*; it is surprising that our two names should so well accord together. We are here in a town, the inhabitants of which are very wicked, not having the

“fear of God before their eyes. We will act therefore in
 “concert together; you in tearing the souls of the people
 “from their bodies (that is to say, in pillaging them by avaricious extortions), and I by making them renounce their
 “faith, and plunging them into the depth of despair (by extraordinary vexations)—otherwise we shall not gain our
 “ends.” In other respects, the Turkish jurisprudence is subject to the same inconveniences as our own; so much are men every where alike. The same author relates the following instance: “Khedher Bey, surnamed Fadhel al
 “Roum, conversing with his friends on the difficulties which
 “arise in the exercise of judicature, one of the company
 “said, In my opinion, the greatest difficulty that occurs is,
 “when one of the parties is rich, and the other poor.
 “Khedher Bey replied, I find none in this case; for it is
 “clear, that the rich man will gain his cause, and the poor
 “man lose it: but the great difficulty is, when both are
 “equally rich and powerful. If you, being a poor man, have
 “a law-suit with one who is rich and powerful, above all
 “things never go to the cadi; for he will not fail to condemn you. My advice is, that you should instantly desist
 “from your pursuit; or throw yourself at the feet of your
 “adversary, from whom you will obtain more justice than
 “from the judge.”

Mosques and synagogues are here very numerous. The Greeks have several churches, but the Armenians have only one. The Latins have two convents; one of Capuchins, and the other

other of Franciscans. There is here a Greek, an Armenian, and a Latin bishop. The English have neither bishopric nor archbishopric; but they have an hospital for seamen. The street inhabited by the Franks is full of shops. The coffee-houses are in the European style, and abound with every convenience. What renders them in a particular manner agreeable is, that the Italian, French, Dutch, German, English, Illyrian, and other languages are spoken in them, as they are resorted to by the natives of all these countries. But what appears most strange is, to find there Franciscans, Capuchins, *caloiers*, *papas*, and *Turkish santons*, who, by the diversity of their dress, and the variety of their opinions and characters, present at once, both to the eye and the mind, a contrast equally striking and fantastic. Such a spectacle is nowhere else to be met with.

The commerce of Asia Minor is centred in Smyrna; a very flourishing trade being carried on by the English, Dutch, and French, with this city. The former of these send considerable quantities of cloth hither; and the French, besides trading in this article, import cochineal, indigo, wine, liqueurs, sweetmeats, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, silks, fattins, ironmongery, &c. Italy sends silks; Venice brushes, paper, and glass ware. Smyrna, in return, trades with every nation in the wool of the Angora goat, some of which is eleven inches long; stuffs made of it, Persian silks, sponges, carpets, opium, frankincense, hides, cotton both spun and raw, raisins, figs, &c. There are consuls here from Ragusa and Venice,

Venice, which likewise trade with this place, as well as from France, England, and Holland. Naples likewise sends a consul, though it has no trade with Smyrna.

The gulf is filled with shoals on the side next Eolia and Ionia, especially towards that part commanded by the castle, which is at the distance of more than two leagues from the town; and in no condition to defend the passage from vessels, which, on account of the flats, are obliged to come nearer to it. The Venetian ships anchor before this castle; for, since the last war which the Turks had with that republic, they have not been allowed to enter the bay, which is very spacious. There are at present two hundred vessels in it, which on festivals never fail to display their flags. They even sometimes make the surrounding country resound with the noise of their artillery. This bay abounds with fish; and great quantities of birds, especially pelicans.

A wind blows every day at noon from the gulf, which is called *imbatto*. The sea becomes then ruffled by degrees, till it rises into high surges. The people of the country pretend that this wind cools the atmosphere, and renders it healthy.

Pliny mentions an earth or chalk resembling white lead, which was found at this place, in a field belonging to one Theodotus, from whom it took its name. He says, it was used to paint ships.

L E T T E R XXII.

Smyrna, September 1788.

IN consequence of the arrival of some recruits, who are to be sent to Constantinople when they amount to a sufficient number, Franks, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, and even Turks themselves, find it necessary to keep their shops shut, as these fellows make it a practice to enter any they see open, to rob them, and to demand money, which they even extort by force, no one being able to deny them any thing without the greatest danger, and even without a risk of losing their lives. As no one is executed here in time of war, these people may commit every outrage with impunity. Though the shops are shut, they however find means to play tricks. One of them observing that an Armenian had a handsome gold watch, went up to him, and, asking him what it was o'clock, snatched the watch from his hand ; but he promised to restore it for thirty piaftres, which he said he was in great want of. The simple man counted out the money, and the recruit made off with both watch and money, which had well nigh cost the Armenian his life.

An Italian merchant, who had formerly ill treated a Turk, has not dared to make his appearance since the latter has enlisted.

lifted. The Turk had threatened to be revenged on him ; he has kept his word, and is determined to kill him. The merchant, alarmed at this menace, has absconded, and caused money to be offered to the enraged Mussulman : the latter, however, is inflexible. He says he is resolved, in order to keep the rest of the infidels in awe, to kill one who has presumed to offend a true believer : but in this he consults rather his passion than his interests ; for he will shortly be obliged to depart, and then, no revenge, no money.

The environs of this city are charming : they abound with villages, and country-houses belonging to the Franks, Greeks, and Turks, which are occasionally interspersed with vines and cypresses, altogether forming a most delightful retreat. The gardens are cultivated by Greeks with very little labour ; for these people need only to turn up the earth, and it almost spontaneously produces whatever they wish. The only ripe fruits which you can procure here, are grapes and figs, both of which are of a superior quality. No peaches, apricots, or good pears are to be had here in a state of maturity, for the following reason. When a Turk enters a garden, he takes the best fruits without paying for them ; or, if he does pay, he gives much below their real value. The Greeks, therefore, in order to avoid this inconvenience, as well as the punishment they would suffer in case of a refusal, gather and sell them before they are ripe. How much are these people to be lamented, in being subjected to such rapacious tyrants !

Yesterday

Yesterday afternoon a shock of an earthquake was felt here. The sky was on a sudden overcast, and a heavy rain ensued, which continued for upwards of two hours. In a little time after the storm ceased, to the great relief of the Greeks, who being always terrified by these events have recourse to *Panagia*.

O

LET-

L E T T E R XXIII.

Smyrna, 1788.

FOR some days past the Turks have been celebrating the festival of the *Kutchuk*, or Little *Bayram*, which falls eight weeks after that of the *Burick*, or Great Bayram: these are the two principal festivals they have in the whole year. They have sacrificed on this occasion a great number of sheep, the greater part of which had gilded horns: this custom is very ancient in the east.

I saw some camels here to-day for the first time. These animals, whose figure shocks our ideas of proportion, are, however, very serviceable to man. You doubtless know, that they carry considerable burdens; that they kneel down to receive their load, and rise when they are sufficiently laden; and that they can endure hunger and thirst a long time, being capable of travelling two days together without either eating or drinking. What appears still more surprising is, that they can discover water under ground, and smell it at a considerable distance. A celebrated ancient historian seems to ascribe the like quality to other animals; for he says, that wild asses found water by the same means; and adds, that some person
availed

availed himself of this discovery to acquire merit. In this manner men have been always imposed on.

A circumstance occurred to-day, which confirms me more and more in the bad idea I entertain of the Turks. One of them was walking upon the beach near some English sailors, who were filling their casks with water; and though he observed his children, who accompanied him, throwing stones every now and then at the seamen, he was so far from checking, that he encouraged them in this amusement. This conduct, however, was not suffered to remain unpunished; for he received a blow from one of the sailors, which brought him to the ground. As there is always a number of people on the quay, the sailor soon lost sight of the Turk, and returned to join his companions. An English marine, ignorant of what had passed, was walking slowly behind. The enraged Turk ran towards him with a pistol in his hand (for in war time every body here carries arms, which they are forbidden to do in time of peace), and was on the point of firing it, when a French merchant, settled in the country, laying hold of him, asked him, in the Turkish language, why he wished to commit murder? The Turk made no reply; and the marine, now becoming sensible of his danger, made his escape, without even thanking his deliverer, whom he left engaged with the Turk, who seemed now desirous of wreaking his whole vengeance on him. Finding however that he had to do with a powerful man, and that he could not escape from him, the Turk began to cry out, Hasten, true be-

lievers ! hasten, faithful servants of Mahomet ! come and behold the insult with which an infidel is treating one of your brethren !—The populace immediately rushed upon the poor Frenchman, and were about to exercise their religious ferocity against him, when a venerable old man of some distinction, piercing the crowd, addressed them as follows :
“ Leave this honest merchant, who has committed no other
“ crime than that of preventing a man from shedding innocent blood. I have been a spectator of the whole transaction.” They then stopped : the nobleman made an address in behalf of the Christian ; and, after reproaching the Turk with his baseness, carried his civility so far as to attend the merchant home. I am just informed that this nobleman is one of those whose great riches make them dread the bowstring. There are many in the same predicament ; but they always find means to keep at a distance the fatal emissaries.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXIV.

Smyrna, 1788.

THE Levant is the country of empirics; for every stranger in it, who pretends to be a physician, is always well received. He then acquires the right of murdering his fellow-creatures with impunity, and is liberally rewarded for it. There was formerly a great number of these quacks, or at least it appears so; for whenever the Turks see a Franc, they take him either for a physician or a merchant. At present an Italian and a Frenchman have the precedence of their rivals, because they are both very impudent and very proud, and talk as much as quacks endowed with such qualities can do. Empirics of both these nations, who in their own country would be hardly qualified to shave any poor wretch, who by misery might be compelled to employ such pitiful scrapers, assume here airs of the utmost importance, while gold flows like torrents into their pockets. In this they are undoubtedly right: thus goes the world, which is divided between two descriptions of men, knaves and fools. The latter are not a match for the former, who have sense enough to see this, and villany enough to take advantage of it as a principle

ciple which directs their conduct. The Greeks never apply to any study, for they are better employed: they sing, they pray, and they dance; and all this amuses and recreates their minds. Few of them, therefore, can attend properly to physic; and they have not a single able physician among them.

Smyrna is a pleasant spot to a foreigner who travels either for instruction or amusement, as agreeable society is to be met with, both in the town and the country, where diversions of every kind may be found. The consuls and merchants every night give *avant-soupers*, in which the charms of social intercourse are heightened by those of dancing and singing. The women of quality here, unite the character of faithful wives to that of tender mothers: you would believe them to be the same that Homer has described. Their chief employment is embroidery, in which they excel. Several of the young ladies draw neatly; and the greater part of them play on the forte piano, or the guitar. Besides their own language they speak French, and some of them understand English and Italian. Mrs. B. who has travelled a good deal, is mistress of both these languages. It is difficult to say, whether she possesses more sensibility or wit. Metastasio, who knew her at Vienna, found many charms in her conversation, and had a great esteem for her. This poet made her a present of his works, to which she is so passionately attached that she has learnt the finest passages by heart. Her talents, however, have not inspired her with that vanity and self-

self-sufficient air so insufferable in most women who dabble in literature. In what terms am I to describe her sisters? They possess both beauty and wit, two powerful talismans which never fail to charm; and whoever visits these ladies, must consequently become enamoured of them. The Miss W—— are all amiable young ladies. Modesty and the graces seem in them to have peculiar attractions. A Miss Am——, whose name is expressive of the passion she inspires, without being beautiful possesses a *je ne sçai quoi* which fascinates more than beauty itself. Her paleness, the mild radiance of her fine eyes, and her air tending to a soft melancholy, but too well announce the sensibility of her heart. Not to love her, one must never have seen her. And who would not be captivated by the vivacity of Miss B——?

The picturesque dress of the Greeks serves as a relief to their beauty. Their mode of confining the bosom, however, does not prevent it from rising to the sight, which reminds me of these two verses of Dante:

Vedeansi le lor poppe a dondoloni

Uscir del sen che parean ventri vani.

In general they have very large breasts; and I am surprised that, among the many things they inherit from their ancestors, they have lost the secret of preventing their growth. Dioscorides, lib. v. says, that, for this purpose, the ancients made use of a stone, found in the island of Naxos, which, when pulverised, was applied to the breast. They still inherit from their
ancestors

ancestors their custom of painting the face as well as the eyebrows, and adopt the like colours, necklaces, jewels, &c. They retain likewise the zone or embroidered girdle, which they often fasten with a sparkling buckle of precious stones. Their winter dresses are very costly: they are of a gold cloth, lined with ermine, or with other furs equally expensive, and cost sometimes three hundred piaftres. This is carrying luxury to a great extent: but it must be acknowledged, that fashion does not very often require dress to be changed. On the contrary, so little do they affect variety in this respect, that the women of Chio choose rather to carry an unwieldy burden, and appear hump-backed, than to acquire an unconstrained and easy air, by renouncing their ancient modes: so much is superstition connected with attachment in these matters. As to the head-dress, it is not uniform; some wearing a part of their hair twisted, and pendent over their cheeks; while that of others is suffered to flow negligently around their shoulders: some tie it in a knot, and ornament it with flowers, precious stones, and heron feathers. When they go abroad, they cover their faces with a white veil trimmed with gold fringe, and are usually followed either by their slaves or female servants. The Turks make a point of respecting their modesty. The young girls, who always remain at home, are employed either in embroidery, or in looking through lattices at the passengers: they are allowed to go out only on days of festivity, and even then they must

go at an early hour, in order that they may not be seen. I made the same remark at Athens; but some here do not carry their rigour in this respect so far.

A custom prevalent throughout the Levant, which some find very useful and convenient, is that of limited marriages. They are common among the Turks, as well as the Christians; and the husband engages to the woman by a written promise, authorised by the cadi, to keep her for a certain specified time, under the penalty of forfeiting a stipulated sum of money.

L E T T E R XXV.

Dardanelles, Oct. 25, 1788.

OUR departure from Smyrna has cost us tears. The apprehension of never beholding it again, has attached us the more strongly to this city, towards which our looks are still directed. Adieu, Chloris! adieu, Sylvia! adieu, perhaps, for ever. Again we see Tenedos and Troy. A fullen silence, which is eloquently pathetic, reigns around them. Cape *Jannissary* in Phrygia is the ancient promontory *Sigeum*, the arsenal and port of the Achaians. Something like a tomb is to be seen here. I wish it may not be that of Hector, or of Patroclus and Antilochus. Perhaps it is that of Achilles. Right—somebody told me that it had been lately discovered by the assiduity of Mr. de Ch——. After passing this cape, we perceived a large castle situated on a river, which is the Scamander, called by the ancients Xanthus; it takes its source in mount Ida, and, joining the Simois in a valley, discharges itself into the Hellespont—that sea in which the unhappy Helle was drowned, in her attempt to convey the golden fleece to Colchis with her brother Phryxus. On the
Greek

Greek cape of the Thracian Chersonese, or Promontory of Mastusia, there is likewise a village and a castle built opposite to each other by Mahomet IV. to defend the entrance of the straits of Gallipoli, which are here a league and one-third in width. This we are now passing; and have already entered the straits, in spite of a shot fired at us from the castle on the European side, from a suspicion only that ours may be a Russian vessel. As we advance up, the strait grows narrower; and, though we are more than thirty leagues from mount Athos, we have not yet lost sight of its summit, covered with snow. Dardanea, from which the Dardanelles seem to derive their name, was probably situated there; for the cape, which forms a hollow, must be the *Promontorium Rheteum* where Ajax's tomb was placed. We draw near to the two castles of the Dardanelles, and the villages; and are come to anchor at Abydos, in Phrygia minor, called by the Turks *Aidos*.

Night is now come on; and a light which we see from a town, reminds us of the signal of Hero. The noise of the sea, which by its murmurs seems to bemoan the love and the death of Leander, serves to increase the illusion. We are going to read the poem of Museus on the subject. It is pleasing thus to meditate upon the heroes of antiquity, on the very spot celebrated by the poets.

L E T T E R XXVI.

Dardanelles, Oct. 27, 1788.

I DINED to-day with a friend at the English consul's, who is a Jew. There are none but Turks and Jews in the village; and it is through the medium of the latter that the Franks transact all their business here, and in general throughout all the Levant. They are the consuls, or at least the vice-consuls, and interpreters of all nations. The consul presented his daughter to us, who is likewise his nephew's wife. She walked barefooted, and wore a large necklace of Turkish sequins, which hung down over her breast. Destitute of beauty, of elegance, or wit, she smiled from time to time; and these smiles gave us reason to think that she had a foul, a point respecting which her first address had made us somewhat dubious. As the place of honour is here the corner of the sofa, my friend was obliged to accept it; but he was not on that account much more at his ease. Rosafolis was served up to us in a very small glass; and afterwards a copper-tinned dish was placed on a stool a foot high: they then gave us plates, knives and forks, and a napkin: the
Jews,

Jews, as usual, did without them ; and what to me appeared very singular, they had put a cloth under the stool. The dinner was very frugal, and concluded with *pilau*, which the consul and his children ate with wooden spoons from the same plates they had made use of during the whole repast. These young people, out of respect for their father, were seated in the alcove. The mother and daughter did the honours of the house, and even served us at table. A great number of small plates, containing dried grapes without stones, which are brought from Smyrna, preserved wild plums, and the seeds of sage, which grows in the islands of the Archipelago, Aleppo pistachios, which are very much esteemed, grey peas, better parched than those of Sicily, as they are soaked before they are put into the shovel, &c. were served up by way of dessert. Though we had none but excellent old Dardanelle wine, the Jews would not taste it. When our repast was finished, the young lady poured water on our hands, and then served up coffee. Formerly the Jews used not to touch any dish from which a stranger had eaten. At present they intermix with people of all persuasions, though they have not laid aside their superstition ; but they find it advantageous to be sociable.

The Jews live in a separate district. The consul's house is genteelly furnished ; the sofas are covered with damask, ornamented with gold fringe. The windows are of coloured glass, with which Venice supplies all the Levant. There are lattices in several rooms, through which one can see every
thing

thing that passes in the great hall. I asked if these were made with this intention, but I was told that they were not. This I can scarcely believe, when I consider the suspicious temper of these people.

Yesterday we traversed the plain of Abydos, where Xerxes drew up his army in order of battle, that he might have the pleasure of seeing it file off; at which he was so much affected, that, king as he was, he cried when the review was over. From the top of a superb building of white stone, he beheld the continent covered with his soldiers, and the Hellespont with his ships. This view at once threw him into astonishment, rapture, and tears, which occasioned the following reproach from his uncle, Artabanus: "Your actions, mighty prince, are not uniform; for in one moment you pass from excessive joy to excessive sorrow." Xerxes replied, "I cannot refrain from entertaining sentiments of pity, when I reflect on the brevity of human life; for of so many men whom I now behold, not one will be alive one hundred years hence." "But are we not," replied Artabanus, "exposed during our lives to many accidents more worthy of commiseration? Is there a single individual of all these, or of the whole human race, who, in the short career of life, would not rather have died than lived? The perpetual calamities and miseries from which no one is exempt, so embitter the happiest of our days, that life, though really short, seems of a terrible length; and death is the only relief to which unhappy mortals can look forward."

Xerxes,

Xerxes, who, like all sovereigns, in whose minds reflections of this nature remain no longer than their vanity is interested in them, then said: "Since the condition of man is such as you describe, let us cease to reflect upon it; far be every melancholy idea from us; and let us think only of the brilliant successes we have in view," &c. together with other extravagancies, which you may find in Herodotus, from whom this passage is taken.

There is a great deal of game on the mountains; we met with hares and partridges every step we took. The Turks are pious Gymnosophists: they spare these animals, which is more than they would do a Christian, if they could murder him with impunity.

The frigate having obtained leave from the grand signor to go to Constantinople, it became necessary to shew the *firman* to the commandants of the two castles. We went first with the consul to the *mollah* to get it signed by him. This man very ingeniously begged us to inform him, whether the maker of those beautiful double crystal cups, which were formerly brought from England, was dead, as none of them, he said, had been seen here for some time; he concluded, by asking us for a telescope, or a china or glass cup. The lieutenant replied, that all these sort of things had been broken in a storm. As we were departing, the Jew told us that we had sat too near the *mollah*, which was not proper. In this he was right; for we did him too much honour in sitting with him under the same alcove. We determined, however,

however, not do so at the house of the commandants, but to sit opposite to them during our visit. Abraham perceived, and gave us credit for our docility.

The commandant of the Asiatic castle is an old man, who struggled so much with deafness, blindness, sickness, and death, that the Jew had a great deal of difficulty to make him comprehend the motive of our visit. He took up the firman, clapped a pair of spectacles upon his big nose, and tried five or six times to read it. The poor wretch, however, whether he could not see, or either could not or had forgot how to read, was unable to understand it. All this time the Jew was making game of him; but foreseeing that he would be able to make nothing of it, he adopted the expedient of reading it to him, in the presence of one of his servants. The salute the castle was to pay to the frigate on her passing was mentioned. The commandant, who never opened his mouth without giving rise to reflections on death, replied in a faltering tone, that he should discharge his duty, if he received a handsome present. This the Jew managed in the best manner he could; and it is to be presumed, that he did not forget himself. Every thing being now settled, we re embarked to go to the commandant of the European castle at *Sextus*, which was formerly the most considerable town in the Chersonesus, and which at present is but a mean village. Though the castles are only two miles apart, we had a good deal of difficulty to get over from the one to the other; for, owing to the narrowness of the strait
in

in this place, the current is very rapid. This commander was a fine fellow, and more learned than the former; for, upon receiving the firman, he, without ceremony, gave it to one of his servants, frankly acknowledging that he had never been taught to read. He seemed to wish that we should make him a present of a piece of cloth; but he was highly pleased when given to understand that he was to touch a good sum of piaftres, and promised to acquit himself of his duty to our satisfaction. He requested us to give him (for these people always ask) a knife, a penknife, and a pair of scissars. It must be allowed that under commanders so little attached to money, and so very much ashamed to confess it, the place must be impregnable. We saw several Christian slaves at work in the castle: these are the emperor's soldiers, whom the Turks have made prisoners of war. When they were first brought hither, they were suffered to walk about, and employed in easy labour; but three or four having made their escape, the rest are become suspected, and have consequently been put in irons.

On our return to the Asiatic village, I landed at the castle with the consul, who was severely reprimanded by one of the officers for having brought a Frank into it in time of war. The great guns are of brass, and seem to be formed of two pieces joined together with screws: they are on a level with the water, and fixed upon old carriages. The bore of them is almost a foot and a half in diameter; and they are loaded

Q

with

with bullets of granite, which, as I am assured, weigh upwards of one hundred pounds. There are likewise culverins, which carry balls of sixty pounds. But the time which must necessarily be required to load these guns, added to the difficulty of working such cumbrous artillery, especially when we consider the unskilfulness of the Turks, seems to me to render it in a great measure useless, since it would be unable to make but one discharge: and consequently, if an enemy were willing to sacrifice a part of his fleet to the first fire, and had the wind in his favour against the current, he would have very little to fear. If to this be added, the situation of these castles, which seem placed rather to destroy each other than to defend the passage, it will be obvious how easily it might be forced. On this you may the more safely rely, as these observations agree with the joint remarks of connoisseurs and non-connoisseurs on the subject, which is a proof of their being founded in truth.

I afterwards went to the consul's house, to settle some little accounts. The question was, what we were in his debt. He made out the account, then made it out again; and, thinking that he had made a mistake not to his own advantage, he began it afresh with more eagerness than ever. His wife, brother, and children, finding that the amount was still uncertain, began to calculate likewise. They were all lost in reflection: when spoken to, they made no reply; for their souls, fixed on the loss of a single para, rendered them incapable

pable either of seeing or hearing. At last the sum was settled: we then paid it; and, having made our presents, joy seemed to beam forth on their countenances.

I saw some Turkish noblemen on a spacious plain, amusing themselves at the *gerida*. This is a game to which they are much attached, and which I had not leisure to observe at Smyrna. They were on horseback, and divided into two parties, each being provided with a stick two feet long, which they darted at each other; and afterwards picked it up with an agility no less surprising, than the dexterity with which they threw themselves on the neck of the horse in order to avoid their adversaries blow, who always made a feint at one to get a blow at another. Amongst the spectators drawn together by this amusement were some dervises dressed in white felt, with cowls and long tunics. They wore large amber talismans about their necks, which they look upon as preservatives, not only against witchcraft, but likewise against swords and bullets; and, seemingly by way of further precaution, they wore pistols, and a poniard in their girdle.

L E T T E R XXVII.

Constantinople, Nov. 15, 1788.

A FURIOUS north wind, which has lasted for some days, having at length abated, the frigate has passed this same strait, crossed by Xerxes three thousand years ago, on a bridge of seven hundred boats, with an army of I know not how many millions (for Herodotus fails me), to go and subdue Greece; in which, however, he miscarried. The Turks passed it long after, but with more success; for they penetrated beyond the Danube, and reduced under their authority all the intermediate country. The two castles saluted us with guns loaded with ball; and the bullets making ducks and drakes in the water, slightly grazed the frigate, and at last dropped near the villages. The two shores swarmed with people; and the frigate returned the salute when she got between the two forts.

The Hellespont, Xerxes, Leander, and Hero! What a contrast in the emotions excited by these names! and how much is the fate of Leander to be envied! Thy grandeur, Xerxes, was but vapour; for, a prey to ambition, thou wert
incapable

incapable of any solid enjoyment! But Leander is loved; and his passion constituted the happiness of his life. These ideas occur so naturally in this voyage, that every one of us, at the moment, felt love to be superior to ambition.

To the right of Abydos is a fine garden, in which stands a pretty house, surrounded with cypress trees, belonging to the captain pacha. Beyond Setus, to the left, is a large Greek village called *Mayta*, the ancient *Madytos*. The *Propontides* soon after appeared to the north, in the opening of which is Gallipoli: this is the first town which the Turks took in Europe, under Amurath I. Opposite to this is Lampfacus in Asia Minor, so celebrated formerly for its wine, that Xerxes, on that account, gave it to Themistocles. It was called Priapus, that god being worshipped here. This was the country of Metrodon, the companion of Epicurus, who resided here himself a long time. We now descry the island of Marmara, which gives its name to the sea formerly called *Propontides*. It is the island of Cyrica or Proconessus: it was formerly joined to the continent by means of two bridges. But Byzantium now presents itself to our view.

It is impossible for me to describe the impression I felt on the first sight of Constantinople. As this city is built upon seven hills, rising gradually and insensibly above each other till they terminate on the shores of the Bosphorus, it appears like a town that has a beginning, but no end. Superb mosques, ornamented with domes and lofty minarets (the most distinguished of which, that of St. Sophia, has served
as

as a model to the rest), rise above the houses, whose varied colours of red, white, and black, are agreeably broken by the cypress trees, which seem to arise out of the centre of the buildings. To this picture add that of the seven towers, and the seraglio, whose cupolas, as well as the pyramid of the divan, are covered with lead, and terminate in gilded balls, the brightness of which is heightened by the lofty trees that surround them. The seraglio seems to be joined to Asia, and to extend along the shore where Scutari now stands, on the site which was formerly occupied by Chrysopolis, or the city of gold.

This prospect is so striking, that the eye cannot long remain fixed upon it without being dazzled; so that an observer is obliged to turn towards the neighbouring fields, which nature seems to have formed on purpose to relieve the sight.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

Constantinople, Nov. 16, 1788.

IT was not without some sort of satisfaction that we found ourselves benighted and becalmed before the seven towers; for the sun, before he quitted the horizon, had so gilded Constantinople, that our sight failed us by continually looking at it. The moon, however, soon came to restore light to the earth; the heavens were not obscured by a single cloud; the deep silence of nature was interrupted only by the soft zephyrs which gently fanned our sails, and the noise of the dolphins which sported around the vessel. Every thing invited us to take a second view of Constantinople, which seemed now to have assumed a silver tint. We could have gazed for ever on this superb city without being tired. Our eyes were sometimes fixed on the seraglio, which we beheld with secret emotions of jealousy mixed with pity: sometimes, and not without interest, we directed them to the seven towers; and at others, we turned them with pious veneration towards the mosques, which we took all for St. Sophias. Rest became at length necessary: sleep, with its enchantments, stole upon us to aid these scenes; and we awoke in the port of Constantinople.

What

What surprize ! what astonishment ! We found ourselves in a lake, whose boundaries were Europe and Asia, without knowing how we had entered it. What a noble prospect ! On its banks are Constantinople, Pera, and Scutari : the intermediate spaces are filled with villages, gardens, and neat country houses. We found the more difficulty in dispelling this charming illusion, as the entrance into the port cannot be seen from the place where we have anchored. The water is covered by a prodigious number of boats, for the most part varnished and gilt. They are filled with persons of both sexes, whose eastern dress must appear pleasing in the eye of a foreigner : they cut the sea with astonishing rapidity, eagerly contending which shall be foremost. The boats of the *Bostangi* form a kind of variety which contributes to make the scene more picturesque, the robes and singular caps worn by these people being of a very bright and lively scarlet colour.

I have been on shore : what a disagreeable contrast ! The streets are narrow, dirty, and full of cats and dogs. The Turks are not so ferocious as they were represented to me, notwithstanding the present state of war, which often renders them little disposed to discharge the duties of hospitality.

The foreign ambassadors and envoys are very attentive to travellers : two of them in particular, more so than the rest, are Sir R — A — the English ambassador, and Comte de L — envoy from Naples. The former is well versed in the

the character of the Turks, and has neglected nothing to gain their affections; in which he has succeeded. His conversation, therefore, will make one better acquainted with the manners of the Turks than all the books published on the subject. This gentleman is of an amiable, cheerful, and magnificent disposition. He has formed a very fine collection of scarce medals. Count de L—— is no less amiable, and will leave lasting sentiments of esteem in the minds of those who have had the pleasure of his acquaintance; for age renders more interesting a man who to the social graces adds such uncommon talents for communicating pleasure and instruction. The countess, who to the talents of her own sex joins the good sense of a philosopher, is every way worthy of such a husband. The young count, who possesses a knowledge of the principal languages of Europe, with a profound skill in politics, is modest and interesting. He has written in French an account of a journey he made to the Crimea, when the empress of Russia was there; and though he did not publish it at that time, it is not yet too late, if his modesty will permit him.

There are only four ambassadors here. That of France ranks first; the English ambassador is next; after him comes the *bailo* of Venice; and lastly, the ambassador of Holland. The rest, such as those of Spain, Sweden, Prussia, and Naples, have the title only of envoys. There is likewise an agent here from Poland, and a consul from Ragusa. The ambassadors only are permitted to have audiences of the grand signor;

R

and

and this they are allowed but once, which is on their arrival. The rest only see the vizier, or the *kaimachan* his lieutenant, and governor of Constantinople.

The new envoy of Prussia being about to obtain his audience of the *kaimachan*, gave us leave to accompany him. The following is an account of the ceremony. The janissaries of the envoy in habits of ceremony, two by two, preceded the *ciocadar*, or honorary attendants, who came in the like order, followed by the domestics in laced liveries. The envoy was dressed in gold brocade, and seated in a chair borne by six *ciocadars*; the interpreters, chancellors, people of his country, and other foreigners, and lastly, his pages following behind. In this order we went down to *Top-hana*, a suburb of Pera and Galata on the channel so called on account of the cannon-foundry, a building adorned with several domes, and situated at the distance of one hundred paces from the sea. In this part of the suburbs there are superb mosques, and beautiful fountains; and on the shore is a large quantity of brass cannon piled in order. I remarked one which was twenty-one feet long, and one foot diameter in the bore; and another which could discharge eleven bullets at once from eleven different mouths. The *Top-gi basci*, governor of Pera, is the commandant of *Top-hana*.

But to proceed with my narrative, I shall inform you, that the envoy, accompanied by his interpreters and chancellors, embarked in a handsome gilded boat, attended by a number of barks. On his landing at Constantinople, the janissaries and domestics

domestics ranged themselves in the same order as before; and we found horses ready harnessed on the shore. The expence on these occasions is defrayed by the porte, which fixes the day of audience; and that appointment must be kept, let the weather be what it may. As we went along the Turks ridiculed us, and some of them heartily cursed us. When we arrived in the court of the kaimachan's palace, those whose office it was to take charge of the horses presented themselves to help us to dismount, which was done without the least confusion; and they then begged paras. We ascended a magnificent stair-case, covered with carpeting, into a spacious hall, the ceiling of which was carved and gilt, and where nothing was to be seen but beautiful carpets and sophas covered with gold brocade. The interpreter then made his appearance, to inform the envoy that he could not see the kaimachan immediately, because he was at prayers; the ordinary pretext of Turkish vanity, which is gratified in making visitors wait. After dancing attendance in the antichamber for about ten minutes we were ushered into a saloon, larger and more elegantly furnished than the first. It was full of Turks, who on the appearance of the kaimachan made way for him to pass between them, pronouncing aloud, and at several times, some words which we did not understand. This noise was succeeded by a profound silence. The kaimachan sat down on a stool in a corner of the room, with his back turned towards us. The envoy and his interpreter placed themselves opposite to him in the same corner, and we all remained

standing. The latter read the credentials which the minister presented, and explained them to the kaimachan; and after mutual compliments coffee was introduced, which was served up by several servants, in order that no preference or distinction might be shewn. When all was over, the envoy returned to his hotel with the same retinue.

L E T T E R XXIX.

Constantinople, Nov. 30, 1788.

AT Smyrna ships are allowed to ring their hour bells as much as they please. Here the case is otherwise, for all is silence in the presence of despotism. Ours was rung for the first days, but it rang no longer. This act is contrary to the Mahomedan religion; and people are very religious in this country, you know, as is indicated by the name of the city * *Islambul*, or the seat of the true faith. It is said, however, that the noise interrupted the grand signor's repose, and that of his wives, whose number, we are told, amounts to more than five hundred; and one of them being sick, even fifes and flageolets are obliged to be mute also.

The Turkish fleet, consisting of forty-six sail, is just arrived from the Black Sea. This is only one third of the number which sailed thither. It is reported that the captain pacha will be disgraced, which would be according to order, at least according to that observed by the Turks. They wish

* The name the Turks give to Constantinople.

it, however, to be believed that the remainder of the fleet continues in the Black Sea.—All trick and imposture throughout.

I have been round the port in a boat, in order to get a near view of the Turkish ships. The port, the entrance of which is only seven hundred feet wide, is immense, and of such depth, that large ships are perfectly safe even along-side the quay. It never requires to be cleaned; for the currents which come from the Black Sea, dashing against Cape Bosphorus, are repelled by those which enter at the point of the seraglio; and then running back to the right, throw the mud towards the fresh water, which, in returning, unites with these currents, and carries with it the slime collected on the coast. The fresh water river, the ancient Barbyfes, is at the end of the port; and the spot where the mud commences, is marked by stakes driven into the water.

This port cannot be beheld without delight; the two shores from time to time presenting charming distant views and beautiful buildings, which seem to float upon the sea. Before you reach the *tersana* or arsenal, stands the marine hospital, a vast edifice, strongly built, and painted in a singular manner. The captain pacha's villa, which is only at a little distance, is pretty neat. At the end of the arsenal is a superb palace belonging to the grand signor, most elegantly gilt. The windows of it are coloured; and upon the gratings are landscapes tolerably well painted. The melancholy silence which reigns around this place; the difficulty of procuring access
to

to it; and the voluptuous air that one breathes around it, all tended to make us concert projects which we shall never be so happy as to realise. We likewise saw the grand signor's small galleys and large boats, which were lying under cover near the arsenal: they are enriched with magnificent canopies, ornamented with a profusion of gold, disposed with much taste.

The port is continually covered with boats filled with people of every country and religion. The Turks make a point of going thither every day; and the Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Franks, very often, especially on their festivals. The Turkish women never fail to go thither, even in bad weather. They are attended by their slaves: if they have none, they go alone, as their husbands never deign to accompany them. It is said, that many abuse this liberty for purposes of gallantry; and as their mode of dressing makes it difficult to know them again, it has often happened that the boatman has carried his own wife to the arms of her gallant.

There are at present no more than sixteen ships of the line in the port. Two of them are well built, having been constructed under the direction of M. Le R——, lately recalled by France. The rest are built in the Turkish manner, heavy and unwieldy. The stern of a frigate of twenty-eight guns is as large as that of one of our fifties. I leave you, therefore, to guess the height of their ships of the line. The galleries are ornamented with carved work, and arabesque, partly painted

painted and partly gilt. The beak-heads are decorated with a gilt lion, having on his head a crown. Those who understand naval architecture say, that their fire-ships are pretty well constructed. The arsenal built by Mahomet II. contains a prodigious quantity of wood; and in the docks are vessels of different rates.

To the scandal of predestination, the seamen and janissaries every day come to blows with their cutlasses. The latter at least say, that they have performed great exploits, such as burning villages, carrying away plunder and slaves, and cutting off the heads of those whom they were unable to subdue (as a proof of this, they wear a little feather of silver tinsel on their turban, if they have killed but one; two, if they have killed two, &c.); whilst the mariners on the other hand have nothing to oppose to this, but a list of the ships which the Russians have taken or burned.

I know not what to say to the Turkish war. Predestination and numbers may prolong it some time; but these advantages are not infinite, and the Turks possess no other. They have no discipline either by sea or land, or at least none worthy of that name; and they expose themselves to bullets with the same ardour that the enemy seek to avoid them. Their manœuvres are very complicated. The guns on board their ships are disposed with so little order, that a twenty-four pounder is placed next to a twelve; and they are not famous for working them in a skilful manner. To this we may add, that their superstition itself makes against them,

as

as one of their prophecies imports, that Constantinople shall one day fall again into the hands of its original masters, the Infidels. Were they to receive a great check, this prophecy might be fulfilled. The Greeks too favour the Russians in secret, because they are of the same religion; and hope by their means to free themselves from the yoke of their despots. Besides all this, the Turks are exhausted, taxes increase, acts of extortion and oppression are multiplied, the plague comes every year periodically, and almost always follows a war, and the troops are not paid, &c. circumstances which would decidedly make in favour of Russia, if the other powers of Europe did not set bounds to her ambition. But an enterprize really generous, interesting to humanity, and which would insure glory to all the potentates who concurred in it, would be to co-operate with the empress in driving the Turks from Europe, to restore the Greeks to liberty, and to leave them the right of governing themselves. We should then see these people rouse from the lethargy into which they have been plunged for so many centuries, and shew themselves worthy of their ancestors. Modern corruption however is so great, that though we may wish such a project to be realised, it is greatly to be feared that it will never take place; because other nations, from a puerile apprehension of suffering in their commerce, would never permit a people to become independent who would soon surpass them, in the same manner as their ancestors surpassed all their cotemporary nations.

War has rendered the Turks more religious; for superstition always derives force from public calamity. Government have ordered the taverns which they formerly tolerated to be shut. These public places were kept by Greeks, who, to increase their custom, often procured boys to dance in them. They were indeed forbidden to sell wine to a true believer; but every body knows that a tavern is not a place where one ought to look for water. Besides, the Turks can drink brandy; for, as they say, Mahomet prohibited only wine: and by this evasion they can quiet their consciences. Some of them however do drink wine. It must be allowed to every religion, to have some sinners and infidels among its pretended votaries.

A Turk, who was in England with the last ambassador from Tripoli, and who speaks English fluently, came to dine on board our vessel. The following is a part of our conversation.—Why do you drink wine? Because I cannot help it; besides, it is but reasonable that I should get drunk with wine, since others do it with opium, which I do not like.—If you do not eat pork in public, you will in private. Would not God, who is every where, see me?—Are you sorry that your children are dead? I knew not what to do with them; God had given them to me, he has taken them away.—Why have you but one wife, since you are permitted to have four? Because one is sufficient, and, besides, I am not rich enough to maintain several; for the custom here, is not the same as with you, where the wife pays the husband to take her.—

Are

Are you allowed to part with your wives? Yes, if there are sufficient causes on both sides.—Is it true that, before you take your first wife, you must entrust her one night to the care of another man? The law orders it so, that we may more narrowly examine into the motives which induce us to repudiate our wives; but this inconvenience may sometimes be avoided by means of money.—What think you of those who make love to their friends wives? Oh, that is not proper.—Where shall you go after death? God only knows; for we are unlike you Christians, who know every thing.—He drank pure wine, and tasted of every dish, that, as he said, he might not commit sin in doing otherwise.

L E T T E R XXX.

Constantinople, Nov. 1788.

YESTERDAY we went to see the mosque of St. Sophia. At the end of the first street, to the right, as you enter Constantinople by the Fish-gate, stands a very singular building. It is a small edifice with a dome; and the garden, which is close to it, is surrounded by a colonnade: we took it to be the country-seat of some nobleman, but we found that it was the burying-place of the grand signior's children. Through the windows and gratings we perceived a fine hall, containing nine or ten coffins covered with stuff elegantly embroidered in gold and silver. These coffins were placed between golden chandeliers. Those of the boys were distinguished by the golden turbans, with which they were ornamented. At the sight of this saloon, a sailor said, with a good deal of humour, that, if he were assured of being so well accommodated after his death, he would have no objection to take his departure from this life immediately.

Such is the corruption of the Turks at present, as a dervise told me, who spoke several languages, that they do every thing

thing for money. This complaint is well founded. Every infidel, provided he pays a sequin or five piaftres, is allowed to fee the temples of the true believers, all the feven mosques. The Imam of St. Sophia did not refuse us accefs to the mosque, but he ftipulated that he fhould be paid beforehand; which is at once a proof of the politenefs of the Turks, and of their being free from miftake. We entered by a vestibule which led to the gallery of the temple. It is customary with us, on paying a vifit, or on offering up our prayers to the Almighty, to uncover the head, which fometimes occasions colds; the Turks, to testify the fame refpect, pull off their fhoes or flippers at their entrance, and carry them in their hand as we do our hats. We neither pulled off our hats nor flippers; and the Imam, whom our piaftres had rendered tractable, took no offence at our conduct.

There is nothing in the dome of St. Sophia that will furprife any one who has feen that of St. Peter. The Grecian architect, however, who constructed this dome at a time when the arts were loft to his country, ought not to be denied his fhare of praife. You would imagine that it was juft about to fall—at firft view it infpires the beholder with terror, which, fome fay, is the effect intended by the architect.

The gallery, which is wide, and like the whole mosque paved with Cyzicum marble, is embellifhed with colonnades. On the pavement were croffes in bas-relief, which the Turks, on account of their diflike to them, have partly defaced, leaving only the upright part. The columns are of ancient green marble,

marble, porphyry, African marble, and granite. But, what wretched chapters! some of which the earthquakes have occasioned to incline downwards, and have been secured with plates of iron.

This church was built by Justinian, upon the destruction of those erected by Constantine and his successors by earthquakes or fire; and it is said he was so pleased with it, that he exclaimed, *I have surpassed Solomon!* This church has sustained considerable injury from fire and earthquakes; and though it has been always repaired, it is nevertheless in a ruinous condition in several parts. It fronts the east, and is built in the form of a Greek cross: according to the account of those who have measured it, it is two hundred and fifty-two feet long, and two hundred and twenty-eight wide. Where the principal altar formerly stood, there is now a sort of niche, containing a large Alcoran, covered with a green veil, and placed between two flambeaux, which are lighted only during festivals. On one side of the altar is a balcony with gilded lattices, reserved for the grand signior when he attends prayers, which, to prevent murmuring and insurrections among the people, he is obliged to do every Friday, sometimes in one mosque, and sometimes in another, without any exemption from bad weather, or even from ill health. Friday is held sacred by the Turks, in like manner as Saturday is by the Jews, and Sunday by the Christians; many of them, however, work on it. You know it was on this day that Mahomet took his flight from Mecca
to

to Medina, in July of the year of Christ 622, from whence the Mahometan æra commences, called therefore *Hegira*, that is to say, flight. On the anniversary of this day every Mussulman is obliged to go once to prayers, in some mosque or other.

On the left of the altar I have been describing, is a chair of a most singular form, in which the mufti, or chief of the Mahometan religion, offers up his prayers during the Ramazan and the Bayram.

There is no longer any mosaïc work in the dome; what remained of it having been destroyed by the avarice or superstition of the Turks. In a corner of the gallery there is however a room, the roof of which is adorned with some indifferent figures in mosaïc work. The articles of belief, and the name of God, of Mahomet, and of the four legislators, Hali, Osman, Omar, and Abube-Kier, are inscribed in large golden characters in various parts of the mosque. As it was prayer time, we saw several Turks sitting together in groups, who were reading the Koran to boys, or instructing them to read it; but we saw no women. It was in this church, as I have somewhere read, that the French danced during the Crusades, with women who followed the army; one of whom, seating herself in the patriarchal chair, sung psalms, which were not of a very edifying nature.

When we came out, we went to see the seraglio, which is very near the mosque of St. Sophia. This vast building, which has a very high narrow gate, and some wretched windows

dows with gratings before them, so little resembles the palace of a powerful sovereign, that we took it for a prison. It is from this gate that the Ottoman court derives its name of the Porte. Near the seraglio we saw a beautiful fountain, adorned with arabesque paintings, and gilt in a very singular style; and with a cupola terminating in a ball and crescent, also gilt. The Turkish profession of faith is engraved on one of the stones of this fountain, which is turned towards Mecca. The same inscription is to be found on every fountain, in order that the Mussulmen may repeat their prayers, and perform their ablutions at the same time. As there is a scarcity of water in this country, the rich often bequeath legacies for the purpose of erecting public fountains. Many Turks gain a livelihood by carrying about water for sale in leathern bags. I even saw a dervise exercise this calling; but I observed that he gave water to the poor for nothing.

We afterwards went to take a walk in the town. The *burnt pillar* is worthy of notice. It is of porphyry, and consists of various pieces curiously joined together by bandages of copper, in the form of laurel wreaths; which being for the most part worn, discovers the artifice. As it has been often exposed to fires, it has been bound round with several circles of iron in order to keep it together. It was erected in honour of Constantine, whose statue in brass was placed on the top. The statue having been thrown down, and the shaft of the pillar injured by lightning, the emperor Emmanuel Comnenus curtailed its height, and embellished it with a chapter
of

of the Doric order, and an inscription which is not now legible.

The race course, called by the Turks *Atmeidan*, is likewise deserving of the traveller's attention. It was a circus, begun, as is said, by the emperor Severus, and finished under Constantine. It is upwards of four hundred paces in length, and one hundred in breadth, according to Tournefort, who measured it; but it is certain that it was formerly of much greater extent, for the superb mosque of sultan Achmet III. occupies a large part of it. This mosque was built after the model of St. Sophia; as were likewise the other five royal mosques, those of Solyma, Valida, of sultans Bajazet, Selim, and Mahomet; except that St. Sophia has but one gallery, and four clumsy minarets (one of which is more so than the rest, having been the ancient belfry); whereas the mosque of Achmet, besides three galleries, has six minarets, all built in a style of boldness, neatness, and elegance. These mosques are all superb edifices, being built of the finest stone, and the best marble, with which the temples of Crysopolis, Chalcedon, and Byzantium, were embellished. They are insulated, and have spacious courts, containing trees, and fountains for performing ablution. Their revenues are considerable, and very great privileges are annexed to them.

In this circus is an Egyptian obelisk, of a coarse-grained red granite, fifty feet high, and all of one piece. The hieroglyphics

T

glyphics are in good preservation; and the Greek and Latin inscriptions engraved on the pedestal, which is of marble, express that it was erected by Theodosius. The machines employed for this purpose are there described in bas-relief, as well as the hippodrome, and the races formerly celebrated in this place. A little further on is a pillar of bronze, sunk into the ground, consisting only of three serpents, without heads, twisted together, and which rise in a spiral direction. It is more than sixteen feet high. May not this be the famous brazen pillar which supported the golden tripod at Delphos, and which, according to Herodotus, was in the form of a serpent with three heads? There are powerful reasons to support this conjecture; and, for my own part, I feel a pleasure in admitting their validity. The populace say, that the grand signior confines the plague within this column; and to prevent it from escaping, they have filled up the opening with stones. At the bottom of the circus is another obelisk, which was formerly cased with bas-reliefs in bronze; nothing now remains of it however but the carcase, consisting of square stones. The Turks use this circus for exercising their horses.

At some small distance from the hippodrome is a subterraneous place called by the Turks *Bin-Din Dirck*, where above one thousand columns are seen supporting a vast vault. It is said to have been a cistern made by the Greek emperors, that they might not want water in time of war.

In

In one corner of a street is a monument of porphyry, called Constantine's tomb.

The befeiteins are much richer than those of Smyrna. Whatever relates to harnesses, horses, and precious stones in them, must attract in a particular manner the attention of the least curious.

L E T T E R XXXI.

Constantinople, Dec. 1788.

THE true believers have lately celebrated the birth-day of their prophet ; and there have been every night superb illuminations in all the minarets. As the grand signior intended to go in state to one of the mosques, we went and secured places early, that we might see him pass. You cannot imagine what numbers of people were in the streets, and at the windows. Among the spectators were several poor persons, who seemed to entertain no bad opinion of us, for they came in crowds to solicit our charity. A great concourse now gathered round us, some of whom viewed us from head to foot, examined our dress, and then burst into a fit of laughter. Others extended their curiosity so far as to touch us, and to lay hold of our sticks, and we were then obliged to have recourse to the janissary to send them away. It was a long time before the grand signior made his appearance, but the people waited for him with great patience. At last the janissaries appeared, followed by the ciocadars, the public officers, the principal men of the court, the musti, the kaimakan,

kaimakan, the *kislar aga*, or chief of the black eunuchs, and two dwarfs; these were all on horseback, and advanced two by two to the number of four hundred. In the middle of this cavalcade appeared the grand signior magnificently dressed; his turban was enriched with a superb aigrette of diamonds. He is near sixty years of age, and has a majestic figure, which inspires respect, without exciting fear. As he passed, all the spectators bowed very low, and observed a profound silence. He was followed by two of his children; one of them, who had a silk umbrella, turned towards us several times, and gazed at us with an air of wonder and surprise. Next came a man, who threw away money; and the chief of the black eunuchs, who saluted every body, in the manner usually practised by the Turks, by laying his hand on his heart, and bending his head every now and then. The grand signior's sword, and two of his turbans, ornamented with precious stones, were borne by men. The taste, variety, and richness of the dresses, the turbans, arms and the furs, the beauty of the Arabian horses, whose housings were edged with gold and silver, and covered with jewels, altogether formed a spectacle no where to be met with, but at Constantinople.

After the procession I saw some carriages of a very singular construction. They were gilt, and made of basket-work; and are used by the Turkish ladies of quality, when they go abroad for amusement. In these carriages there is a mattress, on which four women can sit conveniently enough: they

they are usually drawn by buffaloes; for horses here are destined to a better use, and this I think is right.

Among the vast concourse of people who were collected by this procession, there were numbers whose dress denoted them to be foreigners. This circumstance induced us to enquire into the population of the city. We were informed that, by some calculators, it was made to amount to nine hundred thousand, and by others to a million. With respect to the people whom we remarked to be dressed in a different manner from the inhabitants of the country, we were given to understand that they were Persians, Georgians, Tartars, Scythians, Indians, Arabians, Bulgarians, Bosnians, Albanese, &c. who were come to settle in the capital of the Ottoman empire.

It is so rare to meet with dwarfs, lame, rickety, or deformed persons in Constantinople, that we did not see a single one among all this innumerable multitude.

Notwithstanding the ravages occasioned by the plague, this place, as you find, is always well peopled. Amongst other causes of population may be reckoned, poverty, avarice, and ambition. So great is the extortion practised in the provinces of this empire, and such is the wretched situation of their inhabitants, that the greater part are compelled to emigrate. Besides, the slave trade is very lucrative here; and as there are no nobility, every man, by means of money, favour, or merit, may become of consequence. The present grand vizier was a slave. The aga of Athens was a domestic in
the

the service of the captain pacha. He is returned to his former master. We have seen him again; and he received us in the same manner as he did at Athens. He retains the same moderation in a humble, that he exhibited in an exalted station. One of the English ambassador's interpreters received some days ago a visit from the aga of Galata. The latter asked if he knew him? and the other answering in the negative, What, says he, have you so soon forgot the boatman who brought you water four years ago?

The populace, who are every where equally insolent, not being able to insult us on account of the janissary by whom we were attended, several times honoured us with the epithets of *Ghiaours*, *Nafi*, *Nasceh*, *Indim*, &c. Though it be true that they hold the Franks in some little estimation, they are always ready to renounce this respect, which is almost forced on their part. A European lady returning home one night with some company, passed through a place where there were a good many Turks. One of them said distinctly enough to be heard by her interpreter: With what delight could I fire a pistol at these *ghiaours*! With some certain people it is easier for them to do this than to say it; and with others it is easier to say it than to do it. I have been told, that a Turk one day meeting a poor Greek, stopped him, and then said, I have this day promised to God and to Mahomet the head of a ghiaour, and immediately discharged his pistol, and killed him on the spot. The custom of making
such

such vows is very ancient, but not the less barbarous. This ruffian absented himself for some days, and then obtained a pardon from the relations of the deceased by means of a sum of money, which, owing to their poverty, fear, misery, and the impossibility of getting justice, is never refused; and he appeared afterwards with more arrogance than before.

“Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.”

During the time we were in the Dardanelles, one of my friends, while walking on the shore, was met by seven or eight Turks, one of whom, passing close to him, knocked him down with his fist, and this only for the pleasure of doing mischief to a Christian. Such is the general character of the Turks, and particularly of the ignorant part of them (which comprises almost the whole), and consequently of the populace, who always carry their religious zeal to excess. To this gross ignorance must be ascribed the intolerance and brutal pride which characterise this people. Nothing but powerful interest, extreme sensibility, or a relaxation in religious principles, can influence a Turk to an act of beneficence or humanity.

The Greeks, who reside in the islands or distant provinces, not being able to lay their complaints before the throne, are very ill treated by the Turks, who, because they are their tributaries, consider them as their slaves.

When

When the captain pacha makes his tour round the Archipelago to collect the taxes, he behaves with great humanity towards the Greeks, and the Turks therefore tax him with apostacy. He loves the Greeks, and favours them; that is to say, he will not suffer them to be ill treated with impunity. On this account, the Turks say he must be of their religion. Such is the sophism superstition employs to attack the humanity of this personage, who perhaps may not dare to shew himself so humane as he could wish.

It must not be imagined that the Turks have more partiality for one nation than for another. How is it possible for them to love a Christian? A Turk however one day said to an Englishman, *L'Anglisi star bono Christiano*, The English are the best of Christians; but it is to be remarked, that he said this to an Englishman. I have observed, that they answer the Franks in the same manner, though they consider them all as one people, that is, a nation of dogs. These flatteries are compliments of that false coin which is every where more current than the real; and which the Turks, by conversing with the Europeans, have from them learned to use. I cannot forget the answer of a Turk mentioned by Rycaut. The French ambassador one day announced to the grand vizier, that his master had taken Arras from the Spaniards, and gained other victories in Flanders, imagining that the Turk would have testified his satisfaction on the occasion. The latter however only replied, "What is it to

U

" me

“ me whether the pig worries the dog, or the dog the
 “ pig, provided my master’s head is on his shoulders ?” The
 janissaries even who attend the ambassadors have so little
 respect for their masters, that they never rise when they
 pass by.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXII.

Constantinople, 1788.

WE have sailed round the seraglio in a boat. This vast edifice is situated on a point of the Thracian peninsula, where the Bosphorus commences, and at the entrance into the port. The walls are composed of bricks and free-stone; and a great part of them consist of a mixture of mason-work, pillars and chapiters. They are furnished with battlements and towers at certain intervals. On the walls are some Greek inscriptions, which it is dangerous to copy in the presence of the Turks, who, taking this for a proof of one's being a forcerer, or an evil-minded person, are likely enough to knock one down for so doing. Besides, this is not very easy to those who are unacquainted with the Greek.

The seraglio is defended by one hundred pieces of cannon placed level with the water, and covered by sheds. They are used only during the Bayram, or on the occasion of the sultana's lying-in. There are some of all dimensions; I saw two, larger than those at the Dardanelles, which, the Turks say, were cast by order of Mahomet II. in his camp before Babylon.

You will scarcely believe that we could have dared to land near the garden of cypress trees. The *bostangis*, who are at the same time the gardeners and the guards of the seraglio, made us depart after we had seen every thing. They pointed to some windows at a great height, and made signs to us, that if we were seen by any one, they, as well as we, would run the risk of being made shorter by the head.

The kiosk of the *bostangi-baschi*, that is of the superintendant of the gardens, is near the point of the seraglio, and is supported by twelve pillars of ancient green marble. That of the grand signior, from which he embarks and receives the compliments of the captain pacha on his departure and return, appears next on the bank of the sea.

The city of Constantinople, in its form, pretty much resembles a triangle. Two of its sides are washed by the sea; that of the port, which is somewhat inclined, and the other extending from the point of the seraglio to the Seven Towers. These towers, the point of the seraglio, and the mosque of Ejouf towards the river, occupy three angles formed by this metropolis. The circumference of Constantinople is said to be thirty-three miles, including the suburbs beyond the port, such as Galata, Pera, Tophana, &c. This superb city, situated on a tongue of land between two seas, was really formed to be the capital of the universe; and if that emperor, called (but for what reason I know not) the Great, dismembered the Roman empire, by transferring the seat of it to Byzantium, it

it must be acknowledged that he chose a spot most delightful in itself, and extremely favourable to commerce.

The *bostangi-basçi* has the superintendence of the port, and of the whole channel. His boat has twenty-four oars; and the rowers are all *bostangis*. I make this remark, because the number of oars to a boat is not discretionary here, even the ambassadors themselves being allowed no more than fourteen.

It is at all times pleasant to go round the port in a boat. Besides the magnificent views, which retain their effect even when the eye becomes familiarised to them, every object which appears seems to present something striking. You see many of the boats, which I have described in another letter, in the rapidity of their progress, sometimes run against one another, and dash each other to pieces. The cries of the watermen give, indeed, notice of approaching danger; but, owing to the conceitedness, want of skill, and mischievous disposition of these people, fatal accidents often happen. These boats are light, have flat keels, and are easily overset. There is nothing in them but a carpet, on which the passenger sits cross-legged. Those of the *grandeos* are furnished with a cushion, by the side of which is a pipe. The transport boats, the antique form of which reminds one of the first ages of navigation; the ships of almost all nations seen in the port; the incessant croaking of the gulls, which are continually hovering round; the pigeons that perch on the barges laden with corn, which they devour at their ease, without

without the master's daring to make the least motion to prevent the theft; the shouts of the Turkish sailors when they perform the least manœuvre, and which degenerates into a sort of mournful cadence; the serious air of the boatmen; the impertinence and knavery of the Jewish and Greek watermen; the curiosity of the Turkish women, who do nothing but eye the Franks, and lament that they are not Mussulmen;—all unite to form a number of varied and amusing scenes.

The canal abounds with sturgeon, excellent mullets, eels, and pilc ards (of which last there seems to have been always a great quantity, for we see the figure of this fish on the ancient medals of Byzantium); the market-place of Galata is therefore always provided with the finest fish in the world, which is sold very cheap. As the Turks are bad fishermen, they are supplied with fish by the Greeks. These people possessed the dominion of the neighbouring seas, and they seem in some measure to retain it at the present day, for all the fisheries and maritime commerce are in their hands.

The pigeons I mentioned to you are very numerous, and the Turks extend their charity so far as to bequeath legacies to support them: they do the same in respect to cats and dogs, the number of which is almost infinite. These dogs, however, do not on this account become much fatter; for you may count the bones of some of them through their skin. They assemble in groups in the streets, which to them are so many separate districts; and they seem to make it a law
never

never to desert that which belongs to them. Should any unhappy novice chance to transgress this law, those upon whose district he infringes fall upon him in order to make him behave better. As the Turks retire to rest at sun-set, a profound silence would prevail during the whole night, were it not for the noise of these animals, which bark at every Frank they meet. They extend their animosity much further at Tophana, for they there rush in a body upon those who are going aboard. The only remedy is to be armed with a good stick, a single blow of which is sufficient to disperse them all in a moment.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

Constantinople, 1788.

A STRANGER, who has beheld the intolerance of London and Paris, must be much surpris'd to see a church here between a mosque and a synagogue, and a dervise by the side of a capuchin friar. I know not how this government can have admitted into its bosom religions so opposite to its own. It must be from the degeneracy of Mahomedanism, that this happy contrast has been produced. What is still more astonishing is to find that this spirit of toleration is generally prevalent among the people; for here you see Turks, Jews, Catholics, Armenians, Greeks, and Protestants conversing together, on subjects of business or pleasure, with as much harmony and good will as if they were of the same country and religion.

If we trace this toleration to its source, it seems to proceed from commerce and the government; for the Mahomedan religion, it is well known, inspires sentiments of hatred and animosity towards those who follow any other. It contains, however, some excellent precepts. It inculcates the unity of
God;

God; enjoins the love of one's neighbour, almsgiving, works of charity, reconciliation with enemies; and even ordains prayers for the conversion of Idolaters, Jews, Christians, Infidels, &c. The eternity of future rewards and punishments is a fundamental principle of this religion: but commentators, according to custom, do not fail to expatiate on a passage of the Koran, from which they infer that the pains of hell may not be eternal. There are some sects of the Mahomedans who do not believe in them. The Ghiahamites, for instance, say, that this eternity is metaphorical, as, when speaking of a prince's reign, it is wished to be for ever; and the Ghiahedites believe that the damned will in succession of time be changed into fire, like all other matter consumed by that element. Among the followers of Ali is a sect who take their name from a doctor called Alkhathab, and who hold the joys of heaven and the pains of hell to be nothing but the pleasures and afflictions of life. On this account these people are justly deemed profane. It is astonishing that infidelity should always find proselytes, where there are men who pique themselves on genius and good sense. It was this, I suppose, which prompted a Mahomedan poet, not a very orthodox one you may suppose, to express himself in the following manner—"The Christians make continual deviations in their path; and the Mahomedans are quite out of the road. The Jews are mummers; and the Persian magi are only dreamers. The world then is divided into two descriptions of men; the first of whom have

“ sense, and no religion ; the other have religion, and little
“ sense.”

It is not to be supposed that the happiness promised by Mahomet is confined merely to sensual delights ; for the prophet says, that the believers will find in paradise gardens on the banks of rivers, where they will enjoy eternal life with women whose youth and beauty shall be continually renewed : he adds, that, besides these delights, they will enjoy the presence of the Deity, which will make them happy. His hell likewise is stored with materials of a singular nature : these are the heads of devils, which must be very terrible, especially as we know how the devil is formed. An angel from God presides in hell, apparently to maintain in it good order ; and, according to the Koran, this hell has seven gates. The greatest punishment of the damned, however, consists in their separation from the Deity ; and this agrees with the Scriptures. Some interpreters understand the seven different gates—to be so many different stages in which sinners of various classes will be punished. The Mussulmen are not comprised in the number, if we may credit one of their doctors, who says, that they are to make only a temporary, and not an eternal abode there, like the rest ; he therefore places these in order, and with surprising liberality, the Materialists, the Manicheans, the Brachmans, who reject the Holy Scriptures, and who believe neither in the Old nor the New Testament ; and the Christians, because they admit them both ; the Guebres and Hypocrites. Some day or other, perhaps, some
one

one will find out an eighth door, contrived for the admission of those who believe all that we have mentioned.—Another interpreter says, that the seven doors are the seven capital sins which lead to hell, by a separation from God, and a privation of his presence. Many other fine things are said of this system, which you may see in the Oriental Library of Herbelot, under the article *Gebennem*.

Predestination is one of the tremendous dogmas of Mahomedanism ; it is not, however, without its advantages in some respects. It is to this article of belief that the Porte is indebted for the facility with which it raises such numerous armies. On the other hand, it allays the useless affliction of a father at the death of his children, or of one who has been ruined by some cruel stroke of fortune, or who has been deprived of his honour by injustice or calumny, &c. I have seen several Turks sustain these dreadful calamities, uttering, for their only comfort or complaint, “ May the will “ of the Almighty be done !” I cannot, however, ascribe solely to the influence of this tenet, that indifference which they display at the death of their children, their wives, or their friends. Superstition, imbibed with the mother’s milk, may be converted into sentiment ; but this sentiment, like reason, operates only when the passions are weak, and always gives way to them when they are powerful. A plurality of wives, the use of baths, and the great variety of sensual pleasures in which a Turk is engaged, distract him too much to render him susceptible of a strong affection for any one. On the

X 2

contrary,

contrary, they make him an egotist; so that if he shews resignation at the death of any of his relations, observing, while he continues to smoke his pipe without interruption, that it is what we must all expect, since man at his birth has imprinted on his forehead the marks of death, it is because he feels nothing at the loss—his soul having never been susceptible of affection. Some, indeed, have been known to sink into despair when deprived by death of a mistress, or a friend, to whom they were passionately attached. The populace, who carry every thing to excess, abuse the idea of predestination, even to a degree of brutality. During the plague, for instance, a wretch will buy the clothes of another wretch who has lately fallen a victim to that calamity, and at the same time observe that he experienced the death to which he was predestinated.

This dogma of fate is of great antiquity in the east. In Homer, every thing is done by a destiny, to which Jupiter himself is as much subject as the lowest of mankind. Cræsus, having lost his kingdom from trusting too implicitly to the oracle of Delphos, sent some Lydians to ask the god, whether he were not ashamed to have been instrumental in his ruin? and, if the Grecian deities, to whom he had shewn so much liberality, were not accustomed to be ungrateful? The oracle answered, “That the god himself could not stop
“the decrees of fate.” This is not the only theological opinion the Turks have received from the most ancient people of Asia: they entertain another, which is likewise traditional,

tional, and which appears to me to do nothing less than tarnish the idea of that divinity whom they otherwise describe in such glowing colours. It is the following: "After any signal good fortune, be upon your guard; for it is a proof that Heaven has great calamities in store for you." But why so? The reason is as follows: "I think," said Solon to Cræsus, "that the gods envy and disturb the happiness of mankind; for, in the course of a long life, men are obliged to see and to endure a number of things that are disagreeable to them." Herodotus remarks, that, after the departure of Solon, the anger of the gods fell upon Cræsus, "apparently because he thought himself the happiest of men." "The great prosperity I have experienced of late," said Amasis king of Egypt, in a letter to his friend Polycrates, "alarms me much, for I know how envious the gods are." This manner of accounting for the origin of evil, though deducible from the Pagan theology, which taught that the gods as well as men were born on the earth, is absurd and contradictory in a deist. But the vulgar never have clear ideas of any thing which is superior to mere objects of sense; and the Turks, in this respect, are but vulgar.

The resurrection of the dead is likewise an article of the Turkish faith. The signs which are to precede it, say they, are, that all animals will die, that the mountains will fly in the air like birds, and that the heavens will melt and flow over the earth.—And what is to become of the earth? This they never thought of.

As

As to ablutions and circumcision I shall only remark, that these two practices are of great antiquity in the east; that they owe their origin less to caprice than necessity; and that, the better to enforce the observance of them, they have been always aided by the sanction of religion. It would be ridiculous not to ascribe circumcision to necessity, since we are informed that several nations in Asia would, without it, be useless for the purposes of society. The Turks carry the practice of ablution to the same point as the Assyrians did, who, according to Strabo, purified themselves every time they fulfilled the duty of marriage. Mahomet, by enjoining these observances, did no more than conform himself to received customs.—With respect to his prohibiting the use of pork, it was either because this food, in the countries where he first introduced his religion, was unwholesome; or, because he thought that forbidding it would tend to gain over the Jews, who were very numerous where he preached his new doctrine, and induce them to embrace it; for an inspired person thinks nothing can resist him.

The Mahomedans believe both in the Old and the New Testament; and they often make allusions to the Gospel, sometimes quoting what is in it, and sometimes what is not. They contend, that the Christians have altered and corrupted it, by retrenching, as they say, every thing that related to Mahomet; and they affirm, that the Jews have done the same to the Old Testament. They agree that God sent the Gospel to Jesus the son of Mary, for whom

whom they entertain respect : and they think it ridiculous in us to call him the Son of God, it being, in their idea, nonsense to assign children to the Deity, who, according to the Koran, is an infinite being, neither begotten nor begetting any one. In a dispute in which I was engaged on this subject with a dervise, I had occasion to remark his ability in defending his religion. This man was too learned for a Turk, and especially for a dervise. He was eloquent ; and had a great resemblance I presume to our orators, who often try to persuade others to believe what they do not believe themselves. The following is nearly the substance of his speech :—“ A
“ direct and certain proof of the divinity of Mahomet’s mission is, that the doctrine promulgated by that legislator is
“ disseminated in every part of the world ; and that God has
“ punished the incredulity of the Christians and Jews, whose
“ number is so much inferior to that of the Mahommedans,
“ by the loss of their property, and by making them tributaries and slaves. Besides, the prophet inculcates a morality which is so engraved on the heart that we carry it into
“ practice without the least deviation. We do not despond
“ on losing a son, or a friend, an employment, or even our
“ whole property ; for such is the will of the Almighty. The
“ morality of other prophets, on the contrary, partakes so little of divinity that no one is amended by it. Man cannot
“ be perfect : this is proved by a very superficial knowledge of
“ human nature ; he may get rid of one passion, but not of
“ all : and in this view the morality of your religion is rather
“ a philo-

“ a philosophic theory, than a practical system ; and to prove
“ this, I appeal to the conscience of every Christian. Nature
“ may be stifled in fanaticism ; but such fits can be but of
“ short duration. Add to this, that our religion does not de-
“ generate, and always retains a like influence over us. To
“ add weight to these arguments, I can also call miracles to
“ my aid—Mahomet drew water from his fingers ; he more-
“ over marked the moon with his finger, and split it. Even
“ stones, trees, and beasts, recognised him for the true pro-
“ phet, and hailed him, by saying, ‘ Thou art the true envoy
“ of God !’ It is well known, that in one night he went from
“ Mecca to Jerusalem ; whence he ascended into Heaven,
“ where he saw Paradise and Hell, spoke to God, and found
“ himself again in Mecca before day-light. But I do not
“ mean to insist on this article, because every religion has
“ its miracles.”—This you see is logic, and Turkish logic,
which has little resemblance to that used among us.

L E T-

LETTER XXXIV.

Constantinople, Dec. 1788.

GALATA is one of the suburbs of Constantinople, situated opposite to the seraglio. It is surrounded by walls flanked with old towers. The gates are shut at sun-set; but those who wish to stay out until a certain hour, may find guards who for a few paras will open them. Pera is but a suburb of Galata, in which the ambassadors and all the other Franks reside. It is a pretty Christian town, in the midst of Mahomedanism. The Jews, Greeks, Armenians, and Catholics have likewise synagogues, churches, and convents at Galata, as well as at Pera. Rabbins, caloyers, capuchins, cordeliers, &c. may be found in both these places. The Catholics have there an archbishop; and the Greeks a patriarch, who, with true Christian humility, causes himself to be styled "The most Holy Archbishop of Constantinople, Universal Patriarch, &c." The titles of the other Greek bishops, such as those of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, are no less pompous, especially that of the latter, who styles himself "The blessed Pope and Patriarch of the great City of Alexandria,"

“ andria, Lybia, Pentapolis, Ethiopia, and of all the Coun-
“ try of Egypt, Father of Fathers, Pastor of Pastors, Prelate of
“ Prelates, the Thirteenth Apostle, and the Universal Judge.”
The patriarch of Constantinople exercises jurisdiction over
the Greeks in European Turkey, the islands of the Archi-
pelago, and those in the Ionian sea. He is chosen by twelve
metropolitans, and confirmed by the grand signior. It is said,
that after his election he goes on horseback, attended by
the metropolitans, to the grand vizier, who addresses him
nearly in the following terms: “ Since your nation has
“ deemed you worthy of directing them in matters of re-
“ ligion, my master approves the choice of his *rajas*, and
“ confirms you in this dignity, on condition that you incul-
“ cate obedience to him, and to his successors.” The elec-
tion of a patriarch never passes without bustle and cabal;
and the patriarchate always falls to the lot of the highest
bidder. It sometimes happens, that the opposite party is so
powerful as to be able to depose the ancient patriarch, and
to create a new one. The patriarch pays an annual tribute
of from eight to ten purses, each worth five hundred piastras,
for the liberty of exercising his religion, and the right of
taking cognizance of the differences which may arise between
ecclesiastics and other individuals. In order to pay this sum,
he is obliged to lay the bishops and archbishops under con-
tribution, who extend the like rigour towards the *antipapas*,
or archpriests, and the papas: these again are obliged to ab-
solve all sins for money, to perform miracles for money; and
yet,

yet, with all these resources, they are so poor, that, to avoid dying of hunger, they are under the necessity of working as day labourers.

The Greeks keep Lent four times a year, during the continuance of which they abstain from meat, milk, cheese, and fish. In general they fast on Wednesdays and Fridays; because on Wednesday Christ was sold by Judas, and on Friday was crucified; which might induce one to think that the Jews do not fast on those days. They are ignorant of the principles of their religion, and are altogether superstitious. Some of them, however, believe that the pains of hell are not eternal; which proves that there are free-thinkers every where. A papas here has lately translated into Greek, "*The Spirit and System of Nature*," to do service, as he says, to his countrymen. But as the latter like neither the spirit nor the system of that work, they have persecuted him; and he is quite proud that his writings have procured him this honour. The Greeks maintain that the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the Son: they do not acknowledge the primacy of the pope, founded on the antiquity of their universal councils: they hold the Latins in detestation, and are quite astonished that the learned among them do not embrace their system; for they say, that if their books are referred to, they will be found to be right. This abhorrence, which they entertain for the Latin communion, was formerly fatal to a Greek emperor, who having introduced the service of the Latin church,

church, was persecuted by a faction, and at last strangled by his own relations.

The Armenians, being of the communion of Eutychius, acknowledge but one nature in Jesus Christ. These people have their superstitions also. They have their patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, doctors, secular priests, and monks. They have three patriarchs, one of whom resides in Armenia the less; and who has the right of appointing and consecrating the two others, who are established at Jerusalem and Constantinople. The situation of these patriarchs is not so bad as that of the Greek patriarchs; but, on the other hand, they have not such high-sounding titles. Baptism with them, as among the Greeks, is performed by immersion. The Greeks and Armenians hold each other in such abhorrence, that if an Armenian enters a Greek church, the former immediately imagine that it is profaned, and they consecrate it anew. They excommunicate each other incessantly; and this to us ought not to appear strange.

As for the Jews, they still expect the Messiah; and observe the sabbath so rigidly, that were it to be attended with ruin to their affairs, they would not do any work on that day; for the smallest labour then, they consider as a heinous crime. Mahomet says, and probably by way of ridicule, in one part of the Koran, that several Jews were turned into monkeys for having violated the sabbath; and that at the end of three days they died. In another place he says, that those who
remain

remain of the families of Moses and Aaron, shall be carried into heaven by angels. For the Mahommedans place the Jews one degree below the Christians in hell; and Herbelot observes, that an apostate Jew endeavours to prove that they have incurred this sentence, for having corrupted in several places the text of the holy scriptures. Among the many peculiarities of a people at all times celebrated for their superstition, there is one, which, on account of its singularity, is worthy of notice. When the Jewesses are with child, and the pains of labour come on, they invoke, with the utmost devotion, the assistance of the Virgin Mary. But as soon as they are brought to bed, the servant sweeps every corner of the room to drive her out, several times exclaiming, *Mary, get hence.*

The influence which government and religion have on the characters of these different people living under the same climate, is very striking. The Turk is serious, grave, and courageous; he has a resolute look, is attached to his predestination, speaks very little, and seldom laughs. He is humane, except when a rigorist; and honest in his dealings, but always suspicious. The Greeks dread the Turks, and detest at the same time that they flatter them. They are subtle, insinuating, dissembling, and cunning; and have retained in trade that *Græca fides* which has passed into a proverb. They are sophistical, prattling, social, hospitable, and active, and are extremely fond of festivals and balls.

The Jews, in their behaviour towards the Turks, are more
abject

abject and cringing than the Greeks, because they are worse treated by them. They possess spirit and eloquence ; but that spirit is a spirit of avarice, transmitted to them from their ancestors, and their eloquence is that which arises from a love of gain. By being constantly accustomed to hear themselves called by their name, that is to say, knaves, they are no longer ashamed of it. They act as brokers to the Franks and the Turks ; are active, and assist and esteem each other, as much as they are despised by every body else. They complain most bitterly of this contempt, observing of the Christian and Mahomedan religions, that they are ungrateful daughters, who, being as it were in a state of contention, rend the bosom of their common parent. They form a considerable part of the population in Mahomedan countries ; and the indifference with which the Turks behold them increase in riches and numbers, without adverting to the vexations they may one day experience from these people when they become powerful, is truly wonderful. The modern Jews do not seem to have degenerated from their ancestors ; for Tacitus, in speaking of them, says, “ *Apud ipsos fides obstinata misericordia in promptu ; sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium.*”

The Armenians are active, sober, frugal, and industrious. In general they are very honest people ; and are richer than the Greeks, as the interior commerce of the Levant is carried on by them.

L E T-

LETTER XXXV.

Constantinople, Dec. 1788.

NOTHING in the world can equal in beauty the channel of Constantinople. It separates Europe from Asia; and its greatest breadth no where exceeds two miles. These two continents from time to time present most picturesque views. Near a village, called *Besci Taschi*, where the grand signior has a country house, the view is delightful. Constantinople, Pera, and Scutari, form a vast amphitheatre, which seems to enclose the Bosphorus. The views, by acquiring a new variety, become more and more interesting and agreeable as you recede from Constantinople. They consist sometimes of villages, sometimes of valleys, shaded by gloomy forests, and hills planted with the linden, the ash, the poplar, and the plane-tree, whose towering heads are lost in the clouds, and under whose eternal shade the weary traveller seems invited to repose. In other places, nature appears to have so far forgotten herself, as to impress the beholder with terror, which she alone has the art of rendering pleasant. Here the mountains seem to unite together to prevent a passage; there, they

they appear to separate in order to afford one; and this illusion continues till the moment when the Pontus Euxinus begins to appear: the charm then ceases, and every thing resumes its natural situation. The chief villages on the European continent, which embellish the banks of the channel, are *Bujukduré*, *Tarapia*, and *Belgrado*.

The weather being very fine, we enjoyed great pleasure on our passage from this varied spectacle. We received a further satisfaction in reflecting, that these places formerly were adorned with an infinite number of temples and altars dedicated to Jupiter, the disposer of winds, to Mercury, to heroes, and to marine gods. From not knowing precisely where *Phinopolis*, the court of king Phineas, was situated, we thought we saw it every where. The view of *Thrapia* recalled to us the remembrance of Medea, who anchored in this bay, and of the fatal destiny that befel her.

Though this channel is five leagues in length, and in some places is very rapid, we traversed it by the help of a favourable wind in four hours. Having passed through the midst of the Cyanean islands (which Phineas advised Jason to pass in fine weather, otherwise, said he, the ship *Argos*, were it of iron, will be dashed to pieces), we landed near the European light-house, at a Greek village situated on the shores of the Black Sea, so much dreaded by the ancients. This Cyanean island, which is near the European side, is nothing but a shoal, separated from the continent by a very narrow arm of the sea. Here are the remains of a colonnade
of

of white marble, called after Pompey, though it has as little relation to that general, as the castle of the cape of Scutari, called Leander's Tower, has to that hero. Here are some Roman letters, of which the only legible ones are CLA :: RONTO. The light-house is nothing but a high tower, the summit of which, made like a belfry, is filled with lanterns. This light-house, as well as the other, which is opposite to it, is lighted every night for the convenience of those ships which the tempests, frequent in the Black Sea, drive upon the rocks. If credit may be given to an ancient writer, this sea was originally only a lake, and Europe and Asia formed one continent, which, in process of time, became divided by a sudden overflowing of the lake.

We at length quitted the village to again enter the Bosphorus, where we were soon after overtaken by a shower; the wind became contrary; the sea rose to a great height; and the waves breaking violently around the boat, seemed to menace its destruction. We tried, but in vain, to make way by frequently tacking. A furious gale had almost put an end to our troubles; the boat rolled very much, and the sea breaking over it, drenched us thoroughly. The sailors, being drunk, trusted me with one of the oars: a second gale now succeeded; they cried out to me to let go the tack; but instead of this I held it fast, though I knew not the reason why I did so; I had, however, almost overset the boat by it. It became at length necessary to yield to the storm, and to strike the masts, one of which was already shattered. The

Z

currents

currents drove us against a battery on the banks of the channel, where we landed with a great deal of difficulty, in a place full of sharp rocks. The janissaries invited us to refresh ourselves at a little cottage: we accepted their offer the more readily, as we were wet; and we here found a good fire and coffee. These people gave us their company, and entertained us in the best manner possible. Our conversation, however, could not prove very agreeable to them; for their gestures were as unintelligible to us as their language. The rain having ceased, we reembarked, though the wind still continued contrary; and our sailors were in the same situation as before. In short, at eleven o'clock at night we were driving at the mercy of the winds and waves. Dejection, weariness, wet, and cold, at length obliged us to approach a village in the same gulf in which the Argonauts anchored above three thousand years ago.

Our first care on landing was, to set about gathering wood as fast as possible; but we could procure only some wet briers and brambles. Whilst we were lighting a fire, we perceived that two of our companions were missing. We called them with so much vociferation as to awaken all the dogs in the village. Men were sent every where in quest of them, but without success. This threw us into an anxiety, from which we were not relieved until we saw them appear. They had been amusing themselves with walking round the village; and having seen a light in a house, they knocked at the door. This happened to be a Turkish coffee-house; and by means
of

of a Jew, who spoke a little Italian, they gave the master to understand, that they and their friends wished to pass the night at his house, to which he consented. This news afforded us much pleasure; and we all went there as soon as possible. The master of the coffee-house, whose physiognomy bespoke the goodness of his heart, seeing us wet and shivering with cold, hastened to make a good fire: he then presented us with coffee, and treated us with a basket of grapes. As the room contained but two alcoves, he gave us up his own with the greatest affability, together with all the pillows he had, which made us much more comfortable than we expected. Our mattresses were, it is true, only planks; but we were so fatigued, and so happy at having escaped the disagreeable necessity of passing the night in the boat, that we never slept better.

By these means I had an opportunity of seeing coffee made in the Turkish manner. In a little chimney, built in the form of a niche, a kettle of water is constantly kept boiling. When coffee is called for, some of this water is poured into a little pot, containing a certain quantity of coffee. It is then made to boil twice or thrice, during which both sides of the pot are beat with small rods; and instead of leaving it to settle, it is several times poured out, and poured back again. It is then served up without sugar, in small china cups, which have no handles, and which are generally placed on gilt tin saucers. Since I am on the article of coffee, I must not forget to tell you, that it is very much used here; and that there

is a place in Constantinople, where three hundred men are continually kept employed in burning and pounding all the coffee consumed in the public places of the city. I have been informed by the Abbé Sestini, that one thousand ochas are prepared there every day, each ocha consisting of forty-two ounces. Were you ever disposed to think, that all the coffee consumed here comes from Mocha, this observation alone, I should imagine, would cure you of your error. The luxury of true Mocha coffee is known only to the grandees, the rich, and to ambassadors, who procure it by means of the Persian caravans. It may be had, however, but with great difficulty: and it is besides very dear. One of my friends contrived to purchase a few ochas, for which he paid at the rate of seven piaftres and a half per ocha.

The following day the wind still continuing violent and contrary, I determined to return to Constantinople by land; but this resolution drew upon me the raillery of my companions. I passed through Bujuk-deré, and several other villages, without meeting with any insult, as the inhabitants were accustomed to see the Franks.

Bujuk-deré is a charming village, situated on the banks of the channel. The ambassadors and other persons of distinction have their country seats here. At the end of the gulf is a fine meadow, in which is a superb group of planes, together with some very high trees of the same sort, disposed in a circular form. This spot gives birth to the sweetest reveries, from which one awakens with regret. The
banks

banks of the channel are fertile, and well cultivated. But, alas, at the distance of only two miles from the sea, what a striking contrast! Nothing is to be seen there but nettles and fern!

On my road, I paid a distant respect to the famous Aqueduct of Burgas. Nothing extraordinary befel me on the way, except that the Jew to whom my sorry horse belonged, and whose only harness was a packsaddle and a halter, made me dismount twice; first at a village when I was near a mosque, and afterwards when I passed the country-house of the captain pacha. I was not able to guess his reason for doing this, as he expressed himself only by signs, which I did not comprehend.

The burial-places situated on the entrance into Pera, form a melancholy spectacle, which first attracts the attention of a traveller. Affected at the sight of the tombs, and the cypress trees which surround them, and astonished at the same time at the immense extent which the dead peaceably occupy by the side of the living, he is unable to refrain from that profound, but transitory pensiveness, which often constitutes some of our most agreeable moments. Alas, we are born then to die! How justly did Homer compare men to the leaves of trees! No tombs but those of the Turks are allowed to be adorned with cypresses. Those of the Jews, Armenians, and Greeks are surrounded only with mulberry and poplar trees. These tombs are of marble: the most beautiful marble of antiquity announces, therefore, at present, the remains of
some

some obscure individual. I saw some women walking amongst them with an air of piety and sadness. I am informed that the Armenians and Greeks, during their festivals, after mourning in this place one day, come hither the next to divert themselves. This custom, which prevails among the Turks, of planting barren trees round their tombs, is of great antiquity; for we read in Homer, that the tomb of Aëtion was ornamented with elms.

In the course of my ride, I saw a funeral procession. The corpse was borne upon the shoulders of four men, who were followed by mourners, and the Imam. They walked very fast, apparently that they might not imitate our slowness on such occasions.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

Constantinople, Dec. 1788.

WE have had snow here for this fortnight past, accompanied with frost and intense cold. The inhabitants of the country say, they have not experienced so severe a winter these ten years. The snow, however, does not prevent the Turks from going abroad. They take their walks as usual, and employ a singular expedient to go down a descent; they place themselves on a sort of small sledge with four wheels, and, keeping firm in their seat, suffer themselves to glide down, so that they get to the bottom before they have time to think where they are.

During this bad weather, there were fires in several parts of the city. I was witness to two of some extent; one at Galata, which was soon got under; and another at Constantinople, which lasted for eighteen hours. This conflagration destroyed a great number of houses, among others, a part of the kaimachan's; and the flames had almost been communicated to the seraglio. The grand signior, as well as the captain pacha and principal officers of the Porte, hastened to the scene,

scene, being all obliged to be present on such occasions; which cannot be very agreeable to the self-entitled *Sovereign of the Universe, Shadow of God, Brother of the Sun, the Moon, &c.* The tower of the Porte at Galata, a work of the Genoese, and another at the house of the aga of the janissaries at Constantinople, serve to spread an alarm in case of fire: there is a guard appointed every night to this duty. There are other towers, however, besides these, which are built on a curious construction, increasing in width in proportion to their height. These fires purify the air; and serve in some degree to destroy those remains of the plague, which lying concealed in old warehouses, and repositories, tend to perpetuate this fatal contagion. The expedition with which houses are built here is truly astonishing; you would almost think that it often surpasses the rapidity with which they are consumed.

When the Turks are dissatisfied with the government, it is by means of fire that they carry their complaints to the throne; and it is possible that those which I have mentioned may have been symptoms of their discontent; for I have been lately informed, that the grand signior has ordered every body to bring their plate to the mint, where they receive for it one third less than the current price, to enable him to coin a new piece money of two piastras in value; and for the purpose of raising twenty-five millions (a project proposed to the Porte by a Frank merchant, for the Turks know nothing of calculation), to supply the means of carrying on a war as
little

little liked by the Turks as by our ambassadors. The very existence of this empire is really surprising; every thing conspires to its destruction; it has vices in its very constitution; and notwithstanding this, it never loses any part of its equilibrium.

A propos of war, soldiers arrive every day with German slaves. I saw at the house of the French ambassador three German country women, and two officers, whom he had ransomed. One of them, who is an Hungarian, and speaks Latin, told me that the Turks had not respected the modesty of these women; and they blushed when he signified to them that he had told me so. The Turks in general treat their slaves very ill; they make them work like beasts, and for this purpose often employ a stick. This, at least, is what we are told by the slaves, who, like all those who are wretched, exaggerate, perhaps, the miseries of their condition.

The cold is still intense. Few chimneys are to be seen; but there is something more agreeable, which is the *tendour*. This is a chafing-dish of coals, placed under a table, covered with a counterpane, which those who want to warm themselves put upon their knees: it exhales a gentle heat, which communicates itself to every part of the body. In those houses where the Greeks display the greatest luxury, they add a cover of satin or silk, embroidered with gold and silver: these embroideries are worked by the ladies.

A few days ago I entered a Turkish coffee-house quite alone; which I soon repented, on account of the respectability of

A a

the

the company. They consisted of the lowest rabble, Turkish soldiers and sailors. I however drank my coffee very quietly; and all these people smoked their pipes without exhibiting any of those emotions of mockery or ridicule, which an European dress might be supposed to excite in the populace. One of them, who looked like a renegado, addressed me in Italian, asking me several questions, which, for the most part, related to the dissatisfaction of the Turks at the war. Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a kind of beggar, who, after talking himself, and setting others to talk likewise, continued to harangue alone in a loud tone of voice. Every body was silent, and listened to him attentively. He told pretty stories, and droll adventures, though without exciting, as far as I could perceive, much merriment in his audience.

To this sort of amusement, which forms one of the principal diversions of a Turkish coffee-house, may be added that of chess; a match at which has sometimes been continued from father to son. The Turks devote whole days to this game; but they cannot play for money, that being expressly forbidden by their religion. These however are not their only diversions. They have their jugglers, and puppet-shows. Their farces are in the taste of the nation; and abound with those gross allusions which would formerly have been tolerated only at the festivals of Priapus. In the Abbé Sestini's Letters on the Peninsula of Cyzicum, you will find some particulars on this subject, which I do not think myself entitled to detail.

As

As to short tales, the Mussulmen like them so well, that they have borrowed several from the Christians, which, according to the custom of the country, they have embellished; for in the east this is the case with every thing. That of the seven sleepers, for instance, they make to conclude very happily; for, in order to shew the force of good example, they say, that the dog, by remaining long with the men in the cave, became rational. According to Herbelot, they even assign him a place in heaven, in company with the ass of Balaam, and that of the Messiah.

There are here a number of renegadoes, and to this many causes contribute. For example, if a Christian is found in company with a Turkish woman, the alternative proposed to him is, either to marry the woman, and abjure his religion, or to have his head cut off: and every body knows, that of two evils, it is better to put on a turban than to lose one's head. Last week, two Frank sailors, when drunk, promised to become Turks; and they have kept their word, notwithstanding every effort of their ambassador's interpreter to prevent them.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

Constantinople, Jan. 17, 1789.

THE new year has introduced with it fine weather and amusement. The ambassadors, and some of the Greeks and Franks, often give magnificent suppers and balls, which abound with all the delights of social intercourse. In order to complete the diversions of the carnival, they have even formed masquerades. These balls are often frequented by young interpreters, whose grotesque air and presbyterial caps would make Heraclitus himself laugh. As to the music, it is not good enough to be found fault with. The musicians perceiving that the company dance with great pleasure, conceive it to be owing to their superior skill. On this account, they refused to play at the house of one of the ambassadors, because the choice of the refreshments was not offered to them.

It has been already said, that the ancient Greeks danced more than any people in the universe. Dancing formed a part of their gymnastic exercises: it was prescribed as a remedy in certain complaints; and it even entered into their
military

military discipline. The passion of their descendants for this amusement at the present day, serves in some measure to alleviate the miseries attendant on slavery. Companies of boys from twelve to thirteen years of age, are maintained by persons, who pay a certain sum to the Turks for the privilege of being permitted to dance all the year round. When the taverns are open, these young people dance and perform pantomimes in them. There are here also itinerant female dancers, no less lascivious in their dress than their gestures; and who are called in wherever pleasure is held in more estimation than virtue. If to gracefulness of manner they happen to unite the attraction of beauty, they overcome the austerity of those who behold them.

Since we are on the subject of dancing, I must not omit to mention certain dervises residing at Pera, who are passionately fond of it. In general the Turks do not dance at all; they think in this particular as the Romans did; and, perhaps, this is the only thing they have in common with that celebrated people. These dervises dance twice a week in their mosque, on Thursdays and Fridays. Any one is permitted to enter these mosques; for, as one of their preachers observes, it is possible that an Infidel may by these means be converted to the true faith. They dance in a circle, and with such velocity as to cause their heads to grow giddy, which does not easily happen; for, as they are habituated to this sensation, they are not easily affected by it. They continue this vertical motion till the flute ceases, and then stop with a firm air, as
if

if nothing had happened. Over the gate of the convent they have a white cap, which is the device of the order. They go about bare-legged, and with their breasts uncovered. They generally cast their eyes downwards, but they readily raise them when women come in their way: they wear a short brown woollen robe. Some of them are married; and their sons, by embracing the same profession, inherit the sanctity of their fathers. These people are held in such respect, that if a criminal, or stranger assailed by the rabble, take shelter in their convent, he finds a more certain security there than he would in the seraglio itself. I am surprised, that as they live at their ease, and have nothing to dread from the grand signior, they should not have increased the number of their convents. It is to be presumed, that the Turkish government, notwithstanding its ignorance, knows better than to grant full liberty to these leeches.

There is another convent of dervises at Tophana: and the Mussulmen have their Ignatius, their Bruno, their St. Francis, and their St. Anthony. There is one at Scutari, the dervises of which perform very singular ceremonies. They dance once a week; and, from an excess of piety, mark themselves on the face, and other parts of the body, with a red hot iron. A similar species of superstition prevailed among the ancients. The priests of the Syrian Goddesses, who were eunuchs, whipped each other on certain days, after drawing blood from their elbows. Lucian, in relating this circumstance, adds,

adds, that the devotees among them all feared themselves, some in the wrist, and others in the neck : on this account, he says, all the Assyrians had about them marks of burning. Men must have conceived a terrible notion of God, before they could have reached such a pitch of infatuation.

The principles of all these dervises, were they to live up to them, are very austere ; but here, as every where else, they only impose on the vulgar, whose fate it is to be constantly the dupes of the artful. These priests conceal every vice under the garb of hypocrisy, intoxicating themselves continually with wine, opium, strong liquors, &c.

There is, however, a sect among the Turks, called *Kalenders*, whose manner of thinking is very different from that of the dervises whom I have been describing ; and what is uncommon, and not difficult, their practice corresponds with their principles. The maxim of these people, according to Rycaut, is, “ This day we may call ours, to-morrow belongs to him who lives to enjoy it.” Hence, dismissing every melancholy idea, they think of nothing but enjoying the present moment ; and they spend their lives in eating, drinking, and amusing themselves. They maintain, that a tavern is as holy as a mosque ; and by a toleration the more extensive as it is a theological one, they imagine this kind of worship to be as acceptable to the Deity as that of those who serve him with austerity and submission.—There are none of this sect here.

The

The Mahommedans, as well as all the Christians of the east, in order to give the greater sanctity to monastic institution, trace back their origin to the beginning of the world, and say, that among the children of God, the posterity of Seth devoted themselves to a monastic and religious life on the holy mountain.

L E T-

LETTER XXXVIII.

Constantinople, January 1789.

I HAVE already mentioned the dervises of Pera. In their burying-ground is the tomb of the famous Count Bonneval. The inscription states, that "he was a person held in high
"esteem among the Franks, and who to the good fortune
"of embracing the true religion joined that of dying on the
"birth-day of the prophet." This epitaph affords sufficient proof, that the Turkish beaux esprits may justly claim the honour of founding an academy of inscriptions.

Bonneval himself never wrote the life which appears under his name; he acknowledged, however, that the author had justly delineated his character. Mr. De L—— was long in possession of Bonneval's writings, and at length sent them all to the Count de Bonneval in France, by means of Mr. St. P——, then ambassador at the Porte. This Mr. de St. P—— gained sufficient materials from Bonneval's letters and memoirs to write his life. It is in the hands of Mr. de L——, who ought to make it public, for it is well written,

B b

and

and contains many short and sensible reflections, which render it interesting.

The chain of misfortunes which compelled the Count de Bonneval to embrace the Mahomedan religion is well known. In order to avoid circumcision, however, he had recourse to artifice. He never went to prayers, even on a Friday; but he had an imam with him every day, to whom he humorously gave the title of his almoner. He often dined at the ambassadors' tables, where he ate and drank of every thing; but at his own house he neither ate pork nor drank wine, and he kept the ramazan very religiously. He had a French cook; and every Frank of his acquaintance, desirous of dining with him, had only to say *Pilau*, and then another cover was added. The better to shew the genius of this celebrated man, I shall relate a few particulars, which, though they may seem trifling, will give you some idea of his character. I have them from Mr. de L——, who was intimately acquainted with Bonneval, and who was present at his death. In his dining-room were a great number of birds, and among the rest several parrots. The moment the guests entered into conversation, these birds began to sing, and the parrots accompanied them with a noise, that deafened every body, but which was highly agreeable to the count, to whom this harmonious music afforded infinite satisfaction. Before dinner was served up, a machine filled with fragments of meat was introduced. The cats of the neighbourhood, to the
number

number of three hundred, at a signal which he made, assembled together; and he threw to them the morsels, which the animals fought for till they destroyed each other. This spectacle amused him greatly. Among the rest of the cats was a small one, which, contrary to the nature of cats in general, was very filthy and disagreeable; the count called this cat the *king's son*.

This extraordinary man kept no women in his house; he was always repeating this song: *Let us enjoy the present, the future is for fools, &c.* Ambition was his ruling passion, and led him into errors, which he could never afterwards retrieve. He was seen to cry one night during an entertainment at one of the ambassadors' houses. Ideas, like habits, when contracted at an early period, are more sensibly felt as old age approaches, and the present moment ceases to interest: he began at a certain time of life to grow weary of his condition, and to regret his country and religion. He wrote therefore to his relations to solicit forgiveness for him. Measures were already concerted for his escape; and the pope was disposed to give a favourable reception to this prodigal son, whom necessity had compelled to abjure his religion: but destiny, which always opposes the wisest designs of us miserable mortals, did not permit him to enjoy this felicity—the gout mounted again into his stomach, and killed him. A priest in disguise had been sent to his assistance; but being discovered by some Turks, he was driven out of the apartment;

ment : he died in a sort of transport, uttering these words :
“ When the hogs are out of the stable the door should be
“ shut.” Which shews that he was deeply engaged with
Christian ideas ; for the aversion of the Turks to those ani-
mals is well known.—He was a pacha of two tails, and had
twelve thousand piaftres a year.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

Constantinople, January 1789.

A GRAND dinner was given by Baron N—— a few days ago. Two Turkish ladies, who called to pay a visit to his lady, were quite confounded when they saw the numerous company assembled there, and earnestly begged leave to withdraw: at length, however, they yielded to the pressing entreaties of the baroness, and seated themselves in a corner of the room, where they remained all dinner time. On the guests rising from table, they were terrified to such a degree at the noise, that they ran to the door. The baroness endeavoured to remove their apprehensions; but as they observed that the few ladies present were gone into another room with all the gentlemen, they told their friend, that they must go; “for (said they), the women being so much fewer in number than the men, the latter will necessarily treat us with rudeness.” When they said this, the baroness could not refrain from laughter. The Turks being accustomed to consider women in one point of view only, these good ladies could not conceive how the Franks should consider them in any other.

I shall

I shall add one more anecdote, to shew you that elegance of behaviour, wit, talents, and those charms which among us render women so amiable, and ensure them a thousand conquests instead of one, are things entirely foreign to these people. A Turkish nobleman dining lately in company with several ladies at an ambassador's table, asked his opinion of a certain lady.—“She sings well,” said the ambassador, “and expresses herself with much good sense and elegance.” “I conceive, I conceive,” interrupted the Turk with that grossness of manners peculiar to his country, “you will not say that she is ugly; for my part, I would not give six paras for her.” “And what think you of the other? She is young, has a fine shape, and dresses with great taste. What do you say?” “I would not give a piastre for her. I am sorry I cannot shew you my harem: there you would see the flower of youth, and the charms of beauty.”

The Turks are not allowed to introduce men into their harems; but they are at liberty to shew them to ladies. An English lady found every thing there that the Turk had boasted of: young girls, in whom elegance vied with beauty to render them captivating. What surprised her most, was to see a child of seven years old there, who had not yet been weaned. The girls who adorn these harems are the choicest beauties of Georgia, Circassia, Greece, Hungary, &c. There is a market here, where they are every day exposed to sale, but it is inaccessible to the Franks.

Polygamy it is well known is of great antiquity in the east.

Homer

Homer informs us that Priam had several wives; and that Hecuba testified no jealousy on this account. If we reflect on the numerous armies, which, in spite of the ravages of the plague, have always poured from the east, it would appear that polygamy is favourable to population. Mahomet, in adopting it, did no more than conform to established customs; and he had sufficient sagacity to perceive, that no innovation would ever be made in this respect.

L E T T E R XL.

Constantinople, January 1789.

IF it appear wonderful, that a tribe of Tartars should drive the Greeks out of Asia, and attack them in Europe, establish themselves at Constantinople, spread terror through the universe, and extend their dominion over the islands of the Archipelago, Africa, and a great part of Europe; it seems no less surprising, that, in the space of seven centuries, this people neither have invented nor improved any art or science. Mahomet, it is true, after the example of other legislators, forbade the study of science, because it renders man too proud. He likewise inculcated poverty and self-denial, as two points essential to salvation. According to a tradition, he said one day to his slave Belal, "Conduct yourself so, that you may come into the presence of God, poor and not rich; for the poor occupy the first places in his house." In the Koran, he says, "Those who return to God serving him (that is, who renounce the good things of this world, and become insensible to pride and glory, from a conviction of their vanity) shall enjoy paradise." I need not remark, that of all these precepts,

precepts, there are none more rigidly observed than those relating to science.

The Turks will never make any progress in the fine arts, as long as they suffer themselves to be influenced by I know not what religious principle, which prohibits them from carving or painting figures. They, however, succeed well in painting flowers and landscapes. They have not wholly neglected the mechanical arts. There are shops in Constantinople where cornelians and all sorts of marble are cut. They are well acquainted with the art of dressing and colouring leather. Their gold and silver ornaments on morocco are executed with equal elegance and taste. In Galata there are several shops where they manufacture port-folios, which are in great request among foreigners; and they have carried their silk and cotton manufactures to a considerable degree of perfection. They polish their black horn so highly, as to give it the appearance of a shell: they chiefly make spoons of it for their pilau. Their sabres are esteemed even among us.

Physic is held in honour among the Turks, and yet they do not cultivate that branch of knowledge. It is strange that they should make no scruple of trusting their lives in the hands of a Frank and an Infidel. A Turkish nobleman being seized with a violent convulsion fit, sent immediately for a self-created Frank physician, who bled him; and the sick man having recovered, made him a present of sixty sequins. Gobbis,

an Italian, is the grand signior's physician, and has at present five hundred purses at his disposal.

The learning of the Turks (for they are not destitute of literature altogether) is usually confined to a knowledge of the Alcoran, a book singular in its composition, being at once the code of their civil and ecclesiastical laws. Many Turks, however, amuse themselves with the annals of their own nation, and in translating some Persian authors, and some even in writing verses in the Asiatic style. Mr. de L——, who is well acquainted with the Persian literature, assured me, that though the Turks are accustomed to imitate the Persian poets, they are not themselves destitute of original beauties. In Constantinople there are a printing-house and a public library founded by a vizier, who was passionately fond of letters. The books are for the most part printed. An Abbé T—— has lately published a Treatise on Turkish Literature. He has made extracts from the greater part of the books in this library, and, what is astonishing, without knowing a word of the language. The mode he adopted was as follows: An interpreter to the bailo of Venice read the titles, and some select passage of the book, in Italian, and the Abbé made his notes upon it. But not being always able to have with him this interpreter, who really had a profound knowledge of the Turkish language, he was oftentimes obliged to have recourse to persons of inferior abilities. This method does not appear to me altogether unexceptionable: however, I am told that the work possesses merit.

There

There are schools or colleges here for the education and instruction of the *icoglans*, or young people destined to the grand signior's service, and who afterwards attain to the first posts of the empire.

L E T T E R XLI.

Constantinople, January 29, 1789.

AS this will be the last letter I shall write to you from this place, I am going to communicate to you some detached observations, in the order they present themselves to my mind.

The Turkish dress is pretty expensive; people in general wear rich fable furs, and their turbans are made of very fine muslin. The sash which they bind round their robes is of Indian silk, and sometimes costs above one hundred piastres. When it is bad weather, and they do not wish to be seen, they throw a sort of veil of very fine woollen over their turban, which likewise covers the face, and this they call a *scial*. What appears most curious is, that the grand signior, when he goes to the mosque, cannot make use of this veil were it to rain as hard as it could pour; the despot, on this occasion, becoming the slave of his slaves, and of his own dignity.

The luxury of this people is oftentimes carried to excess. Selim Effendi, pacha of Bosnia, has a poniard set with diamonds, the value of which is estimated at upwards of ten thousand louis. I am told nothing can exceed the magnificence

cence of his furniture. His coffee-cups are all of solid gold, and adorned with precious stones.

The Turks have excellent perfumes, and very agreeable sweetmeats. A certain ambassador, who had a good opportunity of knowing what they do best, says, that there are most exquisite dishes served up at the seraglio; and that their cinnamon *cream* is far superior to ours. The shops abound with all sorts of sweetmeats, of which the Turks are remarkably fond. Among other things very common, and which the children often buy, is a sort of blanc-manger made of flour; it is eaten with honey and rose water. *Scerbet*, which is the common drink here, is usually composed of water, honey, lemon, and rose-water; or of sugar and lemon only: these meats, liqueurs, and beverages, are sufficient indications of their luxury.

We are apt to ascribe the brutality of the Turks to their sensual mode of living. For my part, as I before observed, I should be rather inclined to ascribe it to their religion and government; for I am at a loss to conceive how *scerbet*, coffee, baths, smoking, and the voluptuousness of the *sopha*, can render men savage, since these things tend, on the contrary, to soften both the body and the mind. A propos of their pipes: they are made of a red sort of clay, have a beautiful form, and are very well gilt. Shanks made of cherry-tree shoots are most used, but those of *jasmin* are most esteemed: when these are long and straight, they are sold for from thirty to forty *piastres*; on which account the Armenians and Greeks take

take all possible pains to prevent them from growing crooked. Pearl colour amber is preferred to yellow, for mouth pieces, and bears a higher price.

The sheep here have long yellow fleeces, and the fat of their tails often weighs thirty pounds. I have observed, that the Turks prefer the meat of this animal to that of any other.

The captain pacha, apprehensive that his great riches might expose him to the fatal noose, has constituted the grand signior his heir. This is an excellent precaution in a country where riches often cost the possessor his life. Who would imagine, that this mode of dispatching men could flatter the vanity of the Turks? I have heard several of them boast, that their ancestors were deemed worthy of the grand signior's jealousy, and had been exposed to the fatal noose.

The Turks are stoics in respect to grief, and epicureans in respect to pleasure; a strange mixture, which it would appear sound philosophy alone could produce, but for which they are indebted to their religion and manners.

There are some Greek ladies here so amiable and interesting, that foreigners find it difficult to quit Constantinople, after having once had the pleasure of being acquainted with them. It must not however be supposed, that they carry their attachment to strangers so far as to forget themselves; for, in the companies I have frequented, I have more than once had occasion to remark, that sapphic love is still agreeable to their taste.

L E T-

LETTER XLII.

Mycone, Feb. 7, 1789.

WE quitted Constantinople on the 30th ultimo; and had scarcely entered the *Ægean* Sea, when the wind, which had hitherto been in our favour, suddenly shifted, and detained us for some days amidst the *Cyclades*. Our view was sometimes directed towards one island, and sometimes towards another, with that emotion naturally excited by the presence of spots rendered for ever celebrated by the gods, heroes, and heroines, of the most remote antiquity. The tomb of *Theseus* was present to our imagination when we saw *Scyros*; as was likewise the story of *Achilles* disguised among the women of Prince *Lycomedes*. We passed near *Eubœa*, the country of the *Abantes*, now called *Negropont*, which is separated by the *Euripus* from *Bœotia*. *Aristotle*, it is well known, died at *Chalcis*, formerly a celebrated city in this island, to which he had retired from the persecution of priests. On the continent opposite to *Chalcis* we saw, or rather imagined we saw, *Aulis*, famous for the sacrifices of *Iphigenia*, &c. After having coasted round *Andros*, *Tenedos*, and *Delos*,

we

we at length anchored with some difficulty in the port of this island.

It is thirty-six miles in circumference; and though the soil seems to announce nothing but sterility, it produces wine, oil, barley, and figs. I do not know the reason why Virgil thought fit to call it *Celsa*, for it is not very elevated.

The inhabitants of this place are computed at four thousand, the greater part of whom are engaged in commerce: they have some large galleys, as well as a great number of boats, and are accounted excellent seamen: they are not ill made, and, like the rest of the Greek islanders, are somewhat tawny. The Turkish yoke is less severely felt than is generally the case by the people of this island; and on this account an air of openness, sincerity, and contentment is very apparent in their countenances, which is rarely to be found among the Greeks of the continent. A French, Dutch, and English consul reside here, though I do not think that any ships belonging to these nations touch at this island, except when obliged by stress of weather. The houses are only one story high, but they are neat and commodious. The churches and chapels are at least equal in number with the houses, and amount to upwards of three hundred: among the rest is a Latin church. In the whole island there is no other water than what is drawn from a well in the village. There are here several pieces of marble, which the Myconians brought from Delos, in order to adorn their country.

The dress of the women is quite picturesque, very much
resembles

resembles that of the women of Argentiera, but it is not so clumsy. Were I a poet, I should delight in giving you a description of the Myconian beauties. A complexion like a rose, fine black eyes, enchanting vivacity, a free and easy air, a fine and delicate shape, a small foot, and so many other charms easier felt than described, fall to the lot of the greater part of them. Curiosity drew them in crowds around us; and they testified a pleasure in talking familiarly with us, which made one of our company suppose that their virtue was not proof against temptation. He accordingly said to one of the prettiest of them, "Will you go along with me?" "No," replied she, "for my husband is handsomer than you." This answer gave infinite satisfaction to our pilot, in whose eyes the women of his nation are all Penelopès. As we were desirous of purchasing some poultry, and cotton stockings, for which there is a great demand here, these women were eager in offering us their merchandise, and followed us through the whole village.

We passed a large house in which we heard a great noise, and from which the people within were throwing plates through the windows. We asked if it was a mad-house, and were told that it was the palace of an archon, that is, of a prince (for this is the title still assumed by the richest and noblest among the Greeks); that they were making merry, which occasioned the noise; and that at these feasts archons are accustomed to break plates, as a proof of their magnificence. Our interpreter wished us to go up, and observed, that

we should be treated with great civility, which we did not in the least doubt; for hospitality, and a love for strangers, form now, as they did formerly, a part of the character of the Greeks.

Strabo observes, that the inhabitants of this island were subject to baldness, inasmuch that the epithet Myconian was applied to all who lost their hair; and I have been told that the climate still produces the same effect.

The island of Delos, called *Sdiles* by the modern Greeks, is three miles from Mycone. It is situated in the middle of the Cyclades, so called because they form a circle round this island. It was here that Latona was delivered of Diana and Apollo, who, the moment of his birth, gave proofs of his heavenly descent by killing the serpent Pytho with an arrow. Mount Cynthus, it appears, must have undergone a very great change, since, if we may rely on the description of the poets, it formerly covered the country with its shadow, while at present it is almost level with the island.

On viewing the remaining ruins of the once famous city of Delos, an observer cannot help sighing at the inconstancy and vanity of human pursuits, and is induced to exclaim with Pausanias, "Fortune incessantly diverts herself with the affairs of this world: nothing can resist her power." What now remains of Mycene, which during the Trojan war commanded all Greece?—of Thebes in Bœotia, at once feared and respected by the Greeks?—of Thebes in Egypt?—of Orchomene, in the country of the Myneans?—and of Delos, once so flourishing by its commerce?—Alas, they are now no more!

L E T-

LETTER XLIII.

Gibraltar, March 11, 1789.

AFTER a long and tedious passage, we are now performing quarantine in this bay, which discord has so often stained with gallant blood. Alas! when will men cease to become dupes to the ambition of their rulers? What avails it to be enlightened, if we cannot discover that war can never be advantageous to any people; that this scourge is equally ruinous to the conqueror and the conquered; and that it is the height of madness to fill a life so fleeting and transitory with pain and anxiety? Excuse these reflections: they are the more melancholy, as it is to be feared that the wishes in which they originate will never be realised.

This famous Calpe, one of the pillars of Hercules, has in it something majestic. It is twelve hundred feet high, and its summit is constantly buried in the clouds. The town of Gibraltar is situated at the bottom of this mountain. On a view of this peninsula, which is only one mile broad and two in length, it may be perceived that nature has rendered it impregnable towards the east, and that art has done the same in every other quarter, by planting batteries in the rock. Con-

sidering the dryness of the soil, one is astonished to see it surrounded on every side with gardens and orchards. The English have forced nature to bring forth whatever they please, inasmuch that the earth now produces oranges and potatoes in common with figs, lettuce, &c. Colonel Green has procured earth from Portugal in order to make a garden, which costs him immense sums, and which is without doubt the finest in the place.

The houses are small, but commodiously built; and the shops are fitted up in the English style. The town is lively; for it is inhabited only by soldiers, and every body knows that soldiers are never dull. The garrison consists of nine regiments, composing a body of five thousand men. They are all very neat; they are exercised every day, and the most rigid discipline is kept up amongst them. Notwithstanding the difficulty of making an escape, two sentries lately deserted from Europa point.

The officers are never idle: when not engaged in military duty, their time is divided between the pleasures of the table and of play. Sometimes they amuse themselves in fishing or coursing on the neutral grounds.

Attracted by the allurements of gain, there are here about two thousand Genoese, Spaniards, Portuguese, and English, who exercise various trades. There are likewise two thousand Jews, almost all from Barbary, some of whom retain the dress of the country; and as these people are by no means held in contempt in this place, it is to them almost a land of promise.

The

The coin chiefly current here is Spanish. Provisions are very dear. Port and sherry are the only wines that can be procured at a reasonable price.

A few days ago I saw a Jewish marriage. On the eve of the wedding day, the betrothed lady appeared in public in a hall hired for the purpose: she was veiled, and attended by an old rabbi; and on her arrival, the populace set up such shouts of joy, that it was found necessary to send half of them away. After remaining seated for some minutes on the *throne* (the name given to a seat covered with damask, at the foot of which was a cushion of the same stuff), an old woman took off her veil, and immediately afterwards coffee and sweetmeats were served up. Next day the bride and bridegroom went again at the same hour to the same place. The bride resumed her former seat, the rabbi and the bridegroom standing up before her. On the forehead of the latter was a small scroll of parchment, on which were inscribed the ten commandments; and his shoulders and breast were covered with large band of white silk. He poured some white wine into a glass presented to him by the rabbi; and the latter, after singing a Hebrew hymn, which the spectators repeated, drank a little of the liquor, and then offered it to the bridegroom, who, after tasting it, let the glass fall into a silver basin, by way of precaution against all sorts of magic: he then laid hold of the bride's right hand, and put the wedding ring on her fore finger. The rabbi read the contract, containing several articles, among which were the two following: "That the
" husband

“ husband should not take his wife into foreign parts without her consent; and that should the parties wish for separation, the party first proposing it should be obliged to pay the other eight hundred piaftres;” which seems intended to render a divorce more difficult. After reading the contract, the married lady took off her veil, the rabbi and the husband then drank again, and all the company withdrew. Directly over the head of the bride was a handkerchief suspended from the cieling, containing, as I was told, some pieces of money, intended to serve as an auspicious omen.

The bride wore false hair, according to the custom of the Jews of the country, which does not allow married women to wear their own hair. What seems most extraordinary in these marriages is, that the husband, after enjoying the first-fruits of marriage, abstains for a week from the nuptial bed, or for a whole fortnight, if he has married for the second time.

LETTER XLIV.

Gibraltar, April 1789.

ON digging amidst the rock, a cistern very curious on account of its stalactites has been discovered on the northern side; and in another place, a well sixty feet in depth, at the bottom of which in a reddish chalky gravel were some petrified bones: some of these, on being taken up, evidently appeared to have belonged to human bodies. Pedants, who pretend to know every thing, say, that in order to fix the epoch of the petrification of these bones, we are only to go back to the eighth century, that is to say, to the period when the Moors passed over to this continent. Philosophers, however, are unable to come to any decision on the subject.

St. Michael's cavern is well deserving of attention: it is extremely spacious; and its depth, which is upwards of one thousand feet, much exceeds that of Antiparos, according to Mr. F——, who has seen them both. The entrance into this grotto is near the summit of the rock: these places formerly were extremely steep; but at present the way up is by small well beaten paths. We descended into it by the help of a
cord,

cord, to prevent us from slipping ; for the slope is very steep ; and passing between two pillars into a saloon eighty feet high, the ground of which presents a magnificent spectacle, we came into a sort of Gothic theatre, adorned with columns and curtains, and hung round with festoons. To observe it the better, we procured lighted torches, and were lost in admiration in contemplating the works of that invisible architect, who is ever active, and almost always ever unknown. On one side of this theatre is a dark hole, which cannot be entered without flambeaux. It is a precipice which comes out on a level with the sea, and which is so slippery, that notwithstanding the ropes which the passenger holds by, he runs a continual risk of breaking his neck in the descent.

The soldiers, after working and polishing the fossils, make them into small toys, which are very pretty.

To the north is a Moorish castle, built probably about the time when the Moors invaded Spain, which was towards the beginning of the eighth century. They entered by Algeiras, called the ancient Gibraltar, which the Spaniards retook in the middle of the fourteenth century, after a long siege, the first in which cannon were used.

In some parts of this rock diamonds have been found, which have a very fine lustre even when uncut.

A very good police has been established in this town, which is governed by a general ; and next to Ireland and Jamaica it is said to be the best government under the British crown.

The governor's palace was formerly a convent. There are
here

here daily eighty guards and two hundred sentries. It is very entertaining, after the second evening-gun, to hear the whole rock resound, with the system of Leibnitz, *All is well!* which the sentries repeat every quarter of an hour, when all really is well. Since the last war, this place has been constantly supplied with ammunition and provisions sufficient for three years: but vegetables, fruit, lemons, and excellent oranges are imported hither from the coast of Barbary; Portugal supplies it with wine, Marseilles with preserves and perfumes, and Genoa with sweetmeats.

The bay is spacious, and abounds with plenty of fish. The fleet now here consists of fourteen men of war, two of which make an annual cruise into the Levant, to protect the British trade. This bay serves likewise as a rendezvous for the vessels of other powers, which, on their entrance, always salute the English admiral and the garrison.

Great toleration prevails here: the Catholics have a church, at the door of which a sentry is always posted, to protect them from insult; and the Jews are better treated here than any where else. As to the soldiers, they are excused from worshipping God between four walls: after the example of an ancient people, they offer up their prayers every Sunday in the open air, on the parade.

Adieu! we are going to set sail for Africa.

L E T T E R XLV.

Tunis, July 5, 1789.

ON quitting Gibraltar, we went to pay our respects to Abila, the other pillar of Hercules, situated near the town of Ceuta, which belongs to the Spaniards, and which is most delightfully situated. As we always had a contrary wind, we sometimes visited the coast of Barbary, and sometimes that of Spain. At last, after a calm, which prevailed for some time, the wind became favourable, and we arrived at Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia, where we remained only a few days.

This city is built on a hill: the streets are wide, and the houses pretty good. The inhabitants are supposed to amount to nine thousand: and, as is the case throughout all Italy, there are here a great number of priests, monks, and nuns, who live very much at their ease. There are a great many printing-houses, and bookfellers, who publish a variety of religious books; but without becoming much richer, or the people more religious. As I was passing a garden, I saw a group of monks, soldiers, hair-dressers, and young girls playing

ing

ing together in a very familiar manner, a scene which would have surpris'd me very much in any other place.

The air in the environs of Cagliari is so unwholesome, that the nobility are obliged to postpone their rural amusements till autumn. I am assured that the king of Sardinia expends all the revenue of the island in maintaining the suite and attendants of the viceroy. There are here always large and small galleys; which are not much dreaded by the Barbarians, for they often approach the coasts without meeting them. As we were coming out of Cagliari, we saw a fleet of twelve small Neapolitan feluccas, armed with pateros, to defend them against the pirates. We proceeded thence to Tunis, and came to anchor in the bay.

Tunis is situated on the banks of a lake six miles from the sea. The epithet of *white* was formerly given to this town, from the colour of the ground on which it is built. The fortress is a striking object, on account of the solidity of its walls, and the multitude of cannon mounted on its works. There is a communication between the lake and the sea, by means of a very narrow channel called *Goletta*, over which is a draw-bridge that opens to afford a passage for boats and barges. The lake abounds with roach; and great numbers of birds of various kinds are continually seen hovering around it. No one is allowed to shoot any of these birds, and on this account they increase amazingly.

Before the last plague, Tunis contained upwards of 200,000 inhabitants, but at present there are no more than 100,000.

The houses are built of brick and stone; they are for the most part only one story high; and their roofs are platforms, on which the inhabitants sleep during the intense heats. The streets are narrow; in the greater part of them there are brick arches supported on pillars, so that the passengers are in some measure sheltered from the sun. Two streets in particular are remarkable for the richness and elegance of the shops which adorn them. One of them is called the Cap-makers, after the people who inhabit it, and who supply all Bombay and the Levant with red caps: and the other the Goldsmiths, in which may be found all sorts of pearls and precious stones in great abundance. As no foreigner is allowed to see the mosques, I shall say nothing more of them than that they are pretty well built. As to the steeples, they differ no otherwise from those of the Turks, than in being of an octagonal form, and covered with delft ware. There is no water here but rain water, which is preserved with great care.

The city is surrounded by a strong wall, and the gates are shut every evening at sun-set. The Christians have churches, and the Jews have synagogues here; a privilege granted them in all Mahomedan countries. There are consuls here from the courts of France, Spain, England, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden, who every day hoist their respective flags on the tops of their houses. We are accommodated at the house of the English consul, who loads us with civilities.

The tombs are without the city; they are constructed in the form of vaults, and they are often whitened: a very ancient

cient custom in the east, for these *sepulchra dealbata* are mentioned in the scriptures.

The surrounding country, which is very fertile, and well cultivated, abounds with a profusion of fruit, such as almonds, pears, apples, plums, figs, apricots, grapes, melons, &c. The trade of this place consists in horses, wool, eggs, ostrich, feathers, black soap, corn, olives, oil, dates, &c.

L E T T E R XLVI.

Tunis, July 6, 1789.

THE complexion of the Tunifians is fwarthy, especially that of the lower class of people; but those who, from their circumstances, are not obliged to be constantly exposed to the ardent heat of the sun, are much fairer.

The Tunifian women are not ugly, but they are not thought handsome unless they are very fat; so that those to whom nature has been sparing of this quality, supply the defect by a profusion of clothing, which proves the idea of beauty to be less the effect of reality, than of habit and caprice. When they are about to be married, they make black lines on their foreheads, paint their cheeks of a reddish colour with the leaves of a plant called hanna, and blacken the tips of their fingers. In order to screen themselves from the sun when they go out, they cover their faces with black bandages, which they tie under the chin.

The *bazar* is every morning filled with negro women, who form here a considerable article of trade. These slaves are clothed in a sort of white woollen robe, that serves as a veil,

veil, and covers their whole body except the arms, the sole ornaments of which are leaden bracelets. They sit on benches in a court-yard : the master takes one or two at a time, whom he leads slowly along, and mentions their price in a loud tone of voice. The purchaser steps forward, advances towards the slave whom he wishes to buy, opens her mouth, feels her arms, breasts, and thighs, and then makes her walk before him. The serene and gentle air of these unfortunate beings seemed to indicate, that they were insensible to the hardships of their lot : some of them even could not forbear smiling whilst they underwent this strange examination.

Perceiving, among these negresses, a young girl whose features were tolerably regular, and of a well proportioned shape, I shewed her to a Tunisian of my acquaintance, who had just bought a very strong one, and asked him why he had not made choice of the former ? Because, said he, I should have found it difficult to get rid of her. You did not buy her then, replied I, with an intention to keep her ? By no means ; it is only with a view to profit ; for I yesterday got two hundred piastres for one who cost me only one hundred and fifty.

The Franks are not allowed to buy these negresses ; it is even difficult for them to get introduced into the place where they are sold. Being desirous of drawing near, in order to observe the manner in which these bargains were made, a Tunisian took me by the arm, and desired me to withdraw.

We have been to pay a visit to the bey. As he resides

two

two miles out of the town, we went to his habitation in a sort of two-wheeled carriage, furnished with a mattress and cushion, and with a semicircular covering: these are the only carriages made use of in the country. The palace of the bey has the appearance of a small town, and is surrounded by walls flanked with towers, on which cannon are mounted. After traversing streets crowded with merchants, we found ourselves in a spacious court, where a great multitude of people were assembled to obtain justice from the bey, who administers it regularly every morning. At the end of this court is a superb portico of marble, the ascent to which is by a magnificent stair-case; and under this portico we saw the bey sitting gravely, upon a very elevated seat, covered with cushions made of blue fattin stuff trimmed with silver. He was surrounded by his principal officers and other persons, who were all standing. Though armed with pistols and poniards, he had an engaging air; received us with affability, and made us sit down upon stools brought on purpose for us. We were presented to him with our shoes on, notwithstanding the etiquette which requires them to be pulled off, or to appear in slippers. He ordered coffee to be served us by Christian slaves, whose look seemed expressive of content. These slaves are very numerous, and are for the most part Maltese, Neapolitans, and Romans. The bey uses them so well that, far from regretting, they congratulate themselves on their slavery. The Mahomedan slaves amongst us are not treated in the same manner; but, in return, we make
a great

a great parade about brotherly love and evangelical morality.

The bey permitted us to see his palace. A Genoese, who serves him in quality of a physician, was our guide. Besides the great hall of the divan, the cieling of which is supported by pillars, there is nothing remarkable but two rooms, the pavement of which and the walls are of different coloured marble. In one of these rooms we saw an infinite number of looking-glasses placed at such a height as rendered them wholly useless. If this custom had not its origin in ignorance and bad taste, it is doubtless founded upon some prejudice which I am unable to guess.

We saw nothing interesting in the garden but a banana; the plant hanna, some orange trees loaded with fruit, a great quantity of double jessamines; and a belvedere, the only ornament of which was a magnificent sofa placed near a spouting fountain, the basin of which was filled with variegated fish; and its waters, while they refreshed the air, served to break the silence that reigned around. The belvedere admits light by gratings made of painted wood, along which grow jessamines that diffuse a sweet smell around, and render it impervious to the sun.

We then went into the stables, where we saw upwards of two hundred old horses, some of which had three of their feet and their tails painted with hanna, and others were bedaubed all over with it. We were afterwards conducted to

F f

the

the menagerie, which contains nothing but lions and tigers chained in paltry wooden cages.

The bey, whose power is absolute and hereditary, is nevertheless obliged to pay annually to the grand signior a pretty considerable tribute. Besides his own domains, he has some other revenues arising from taxes, and the prizes made by the corsairs; and he is able to maintain a body of ten thousand horse. He makes himself respected by his subjects; and though dependent on the grand signior in a certain degree, he does not, it is said, stand in awe of him.

Seeing on my arrival here some people clothed in long robes of very dirty woollen cloth, and sitting in the middle of the streets with their arms resting upon their knees, I took them at first for beggars, vagabonds, or half-starved wretches; but I soon perceived this to be the mode of dress common to all the inhabitants. Who would imagine such beggars are the allies of the greatest potentates in Europe?

LETTER XLVII.

Carthage, July 8, 1789.

Urbs antiqua fuit, Tyrii tenuere coloni,
 Carthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe
 Ostia: dives opum, studiisque asperrima belli.

ÆNEAS in Virgil seems quite astonished to see a magnificent city, rising upon a spot occupied a little before by cottages.

Miratur molem Æneas, magalia quondam.

What a strange revolution! Time, which destroys all things, has annihilated Carthage; and the cottages again appear.

Carthage was situated about ten miles from Tunis, upon three hills of a peninsula which is nearly forty miles in circumference. This superb city was twenty-three miles round, and contained seven hundred thousand inhabitants. No traces of it now remain, except the ruins of some reservoirs, one of which is very spacious, and in pretty good preservation. There still remain some very thick walls of a fortress, supposed to be that of Byrsa. But what really deserves attention is an aqueduct built of free stone, which has in part resisted the ravages of time. It was originally seventy feet

in height, and fifty miles in length. On the spot where it begins, are the ruins of a magnificent temple, a view of which Mr. B—— has drawn. In the bed of the sea are found drains, and other remains of buildings, which prove that the ravages of that element have not been able to effect the entire destruction of Carthage.

The adjacent country produces corn, vegetables, and fruit, and is intersected with veins of porphyry, verd antique, &c. Mosaic pavements may also still be seen; one in particular, which is in excellent preservation, and which appears to have belonged to a temple.

I need not tell you, that in laying the foundations of this city, the Carthaginians found a horse's head; and that from this circumstance they inferred, that the nation would be warlike and victorious. It was for this reason that their medals bore the impression of that animal's head. Great numbers of these medals in copper are every day dug up, and we have bought some of them.

In landing here towards Salines, the Bedouins or Arabs first attracted our attention. These Arabs answer to the description which Virgil has given of the herdsmen of Numidia.

Quid tibi pastores Lybiæ, quid pascua versu
Prosequar, & raris habitata mapalia tectis?
Sæpe diem noctemque & totum ex ordine mensem
Pascitur, itque pecus longa in deserta sine ullis
Hospitiis: tantum campi jacet. Omnia secum
Armentarius Afer agit, tectumque, Laremque
Armaque Amyclæumque canem Cressamque pharetram.

Virgil,

Virgil, it is well known, means by Lybia, Africa in general; and by Armentarius Afer, the shepherds of Numidia.

One of these Arabians came to meet us, and assisted us in finding game. We killed a hare, some pigeons and partridges, of which last there are great quantities here. I cannot describe to you the pleasure we felt in traversing this country, which formerly made the capital of the universe tremble. This spot had charms to us, which seemed to increase our grief at quitting it before we had well examined every thing to be seen in it. We exerted ourselves therefore in picking up pieces of marble and porphyry; and the Arab, in order to ingratiate himself into our favour, did the like, and presented them to us. We carried them along with us, as if we had thought these mean tokens necessary to remind us of our having been at Carthage.

As the heat increased, and we were extremely thirsty, we approached a village, where we perceived a group of men and women engaged in drawing water from a well to water a garden. We made signs to them to give us some milk, and were fortunate enough to make ourselves understood. A crowd of people now assembled round us, some of whom brought us pigeons, which they wished to sell at an exorbitant price; others asked us for powder; and some viewed with astonishment our dress and our guns. At last they brought us some milk; and though it was sour, we thought it excellent. We gave a piastre to the man who sold it, and expected to receive change; but after examining it, he put
it

it into his pocket, signifying, that it was exactly what we were indebted to him.

The Arab now conducted us to his tent, where we found an old man sitting upon a mat, with a pipe in his mouth, and amusing himself with a little dog. After talking a long time by signs without being able to understand each other, the old Arab, drawing up a curtain which divided the tent, took from a large case some eggs, pigeons, and figs, which he begged us to accept. In return we gave him all the powder and shot we had, which afforded him a great deal of pleasure.

We now perceived a troop of Arabs and their wives advancing towards us, and driving before them a flock of camels and sheep. This visit was not very agreeable; for notwithstanding the civility of our landlords, we had not the best opinion in the world of these descendants of Ismael, because we had been apprised, that in general they are insolent, and often conceal treachery under the garb of hospitality. The women, on a sign made by the old man, hid their faces in their robes. When they approached us, they began to ask us for powder and shot; and, on our telling them that we had none, they did not hesitate to search us; but they shewed such a desire for getting possession of our guns, and of every thing else about us, that we prudently thought proper to get away. Some followed us even to the boat, and attempted to take away the sails.

These Arabs lead the same kind of life as their ancestors.

They

They pitch their tents sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, and lead their flocks from pasture to pasture. When the grass begins to fail in the places they have chosen, they immediately quit them, and go in search of others. They look with contempt upon us, who, as they say, are servile enough to cultivate the earth, and to live enclosed between four walls as in a prison. Their amusements consist only in riding, hunting, smoking, and sleeping: they live wholly on mutton and milk, and are unacquainted with either bread or wine. Though the food of the Arabs appears to be both plain and wholesome, they are very lean; they are however strong, robust, and well enough made, but a little sun-burnt. Freed from the yoke of custom and prejudice, they consult only their interest or caprice. Each individual is a king in his own family, and enjoys every pleasure that ease and liberty are capable of bestowing.

The sole riches of the Arabs consist in camels and flocks: so that, in describing a rich man, they say he possesses so many camels, so many sheep, &c.

Their habitations consist only of a tent made of goat's hair, wove so closely that neither sun nor rain can penetrate it. Their form is oblong, and very much resembles the keel of a ship turned upwards. The ancients called these tents *mapalia*. We may learn from a passage of Sallust, that these tents are the same now as they were in his time: "*Edificia*
"*Numidarum quæ mapalia illi vocant oblonga incurvis lateribus*
"*teſta quaſi navium carinæ ſunt.*" They are of different ſizes,
and

and are usually supported by one stake only, though some of them have two or three. These stakes are eight or nine feet high, and four or five inches thick, and have hooks all round them, on which are hung baskets, saddles, and arms. The tent is divided by a cloth into two parts: it contains neither beds, mattresses, nor pillows; for these people wrap themselves up in their robes, and either sleep upon the bare earth, or upon a mat. One part of the tent is appropriated to the use of those who are married; the rest lie promiscuously together.

The women spin and weave wool, make their tents, saddle their horses, clean their arms, and, in short, do every thing without complaining of their situation. The old Arab's wife, whom I spoke of, was working under the scorching heat, while the husband sat in his tent enjoying the cool breeze.

LETTER XLVIII.

Tripoli, July 17, 1789.

WE met with nothing remarkable on our way thither, but the Ara Ægimori, the Ara Philenorum, Cape Good, the Promontory of Mercury, and the view exhibited by Tripoli, which increafes in beauty as you draw nearer to it. This town is fituated on the borders of the fea, at the foot of an immense foreft of palm-trees.

The kingdom of Tripoli, fo called from having formerly had under its jurifdiction the three great towns of *Sabrata*, *Oea*, and *Leptis Magna*, is neither fo populous nor fo rich as Tunis. Tripoli, the capital, is built upon the spot where formerly flood the ancient Abrotonum, and is furrounded with good fortifications. The houfes are built of brick and ftone, and are but one ftory high : they are white-wafhed ; and this, added to the duft and rubbifh with which the ftreets are filled, occasions the greater part of the inhabitants to have fore eyes ; a complaint very prevalent among the Tunifians, owing to the fame caufe. The gates of this place are arched, and fo fmall that it is neceffary to ftoop in order to get through

G g

them ;

them; a custom established to render the passage more difficult in the time of an insurrection.

At the entrance into the city is a triumphal monument of the Composite order, which, according to the inscription, seems to have been erected in honour of Marcus Aurelius and his colleague, on account of the victory which the latter obtained over the Armenians. The flowers, vine leaves, and trophies are in good preservation; but the statues, which were in the niches, have been destroyed; and the rage of superstition has mutilated the four busts placed above them, as well as all the figures in bas-relief. On that side of the arch, however, which contains the inscription, is an upright figure by the side of a woman sitting, and surrounded by little children, the drapery of which is perfectly entire. Some of the pieces of marble, of which this monument is composed, are of an enormous size. On account of the great heat, I was not able to copy what remains of the inscription.

Some of the Tripolitans, perceiving that we looked attentively at this monument, began to examine it also themselves; and one of them even extended his curiosity so far as to ask us, at what period the infidels had erected it.

The Franks enjoy privileges here, of very great importance in a country where the populace are under so little subordination. For example, if one of them happen to have been insulted, he has the right of causing the offender to be arrested by one of the janissaries belonging to the consul of his nation, and taken before a judge. There are consuls here from
France,

France, England, Holland, Denmark, Spain, Venice, and Naples.

There are neither wells nor fountains in this place; and notwithstanding every precaution that can be taken to preserve the rain water, it often happens, in dry seasons, that none of it is to be found.

Roman and African medals, both of silver and copper, are found in this country: we purchased some copper ones, which have a horse's head on one side, with a palm-tree and dates on the other.

We yesterday paid a visit to the dey, who did us the honour to give us a particular audience in a spacious saloon. A great number of persons, among whom the most conspicuous was his own son, were standing before him, while a slave with a large fan made of swan's feathers cooled the air, and drove the flies from him. He was armed with pistols and poniards. You would naturally suppose, that the first compliment was made by the consul. But this was not the case; a janissary, stepping before the company, advanced towards the dey, and, after kissing his hands, spoke a few words to him. The bey at last desired us to be seated; and soon after some slaves spread large pieces of muslin fringed with gold upon our knees, and brought us coffee, and various sorts of *scerbet*. One of the slaves then poured rose-water over us, whilst another perfumed us with myrrh and aloes—all the while making several inclinations of the head.

The son of the bey having expressed a wish to see our frigate, a council was held to determine whether this proceeding was consistent with his dignity; but it being observed, that neither his father nor grandfather had ever been on board a foreign ship of war, it was decided in the negative.

LET-

L E T T E R XLIX.

Porto Farina, July 26, 1789.

A CONTRARY wind has obliged us to put into this port, from which we can see the *Castra Corneliana* and Utica, or at least some of its ruins.

The village is situated at the foot of a mountain at the mouth of the river *Me-joida*, anciently *Bagrada*, opposite to Carthage. It was on the banks of this river that a prodigious serpent, one hundred and twenty feet in length, harassed the army of Regulus so much, that the soldiers, unable to pierce it with their arms, were obliged to have recourse to their balistas (or engines) to kill it.

The houses are of the same kind as those of Tunis, except that they are smaller. The arsenal and mole are worthy of notice. There are two corvettes here on the stocks, one of eighteen, and the other of twenty-four guns, both constructed by an Italian. The port is full of galleys and galliots.

The governor pressed us so earnestly to go to see his garden that we at length went, attended by an English renegado. We saw nothing in it but a great number of fruit-trees planted
in

in a vineyard without any order. The gardener conducted us into a sort of pavilion, situated in the middle of a flower-garden, and surrounded with thick bushy trees, and treated us with a basket of excellent fruit. A little way from us, a camel was very gravely turning the wheel of a well, which served to water the garden. The renegado here related to us some of the events of his life. Having been obliged to abjure his religion, he was appointed to the command of a small ship of war. Immediately after, he fell into the hands of the Maltese; and to avoid the cruelties to which the overpious knights of St. John doom their slaves, he abjured Mahomet; and, on his return hither, again renounced Jesus Christ. He has lately married the governor's daughter, and possesses some landed property: he says, that if he had a sum of money at his disposal, he might, perhaps, be tempted to return to his own country; but as that is not likely to happen, he has given up all thoughts of it.

When we came out of the garden, we returned to the village, and entered a coffee-house, to rest ourselves, and to avoid the heat, which was excessive. Here we saw several persons playing at chess, a sort of game very much in vogue in these countries. The coffee-house is of an oblong form, and is furnished with a high alcove covered with mats: the roof is supported by two rows of pillars.

On our return to the governor's house we found a man bound with cords, who had been apprehended as an adulterer, having been seen to come out of a woman's house; for no
other

other proof of guilt is necessary here. He was condemned to the galleys for a year ; and the woman, who came to plead her own cause, escaped for six months imprisonment. “ You see,” said a little humpbacked man, who explained to me, in Italian, what had passed, “ that the Barbarians are not so rigid on this head as formerly ; they now think, with the Marquis of Beccara, that the punishment should be proportioned to the crime.” This speech from the mouth of a Turk astonished me. “ You—how—who—I know what you mean ; but your surprise will cease when you know who I am. Know, then, that I am a Neapolitan ; that I exercised in my own country the trade of *paglietta* ; and that I have been obliged, from circumstances, to assume the turban. My name is Selim ; and I am secretary of the arsenal.”—“ But how do you like your new trade ?” “ Very well. Here I command three hundred galley slaves ; and at home I was under every one’s controul. I am sometimes dejected, but was so in my own country.”—“ Do you ever expect to see it again ?” “ No : I might escape from this country ; but what should I do at home ? Subject myself to the reproaches of people who do not care for me ; and who, perhaps, might take it into their heads to treat me with contempt.”—“ But are you really persuaded of the truth of the Mahomedan religion ?” “ At least as well as I was of that which I have renounced.”

L E T-

L E T T E R L.

Toulon, September 2, 1789.

WE left Porto Farina in calm weather, and stopped some hours at an inhabited island called *Galita*, the ancient *Dracontia*, on the coast of Tunis. In this island there is a place where excellent fresh water may be procured, and it abounds also with wild goats. The Neapolitans and Maltese go thither to fish, and to gather coral, under convoy of the Maltese galleys.

We are at length arrived in this port, where we have performed twenty-five days quarantine. It may be proper to inform you, that the people would not suffer us to depart till they had perfumed us four times.

The neighbouring country is delightful. An infinite chain of hills and mounts, as varied in their shape as their productions, form picturesque views on every side.

I shall not enlarge on the size or commodiousness of the port, as I am not able to say any thing new on the subject.

The power of France is in part exhibited at Toulon: there are now in the basin eighteen large ships of the line, above all which rises, in proud pre-eminence, the Commerce of Marseilles, of one hundred and twenty guns.

As

As foreigners are not permitted to see the arsenal, I am deprived of the pleasure of saying any thing to you on that subject.

The quay is well paved ; and the awnings spread by the tradesmen to shelter their shops from the heat of the sun, make it pleasant to walk on it.

Among the fine buildings may be reckoned the marine hospital and the town-hall ; in the latter, the two ends, which support the balcony, are the work of the famous Puget.

The country here abounds with all sorts of vegetables, and the most exquisite fruits ; and the market is constantly filled with different sorts of fish.

There is a silk and cotton manufactory here, the productions of which are sold very cheap. The population of Toulon may amount to 30,000 souls.

L E T T E R L I.

Marseilles, September 6, 1789.

WE came hither by land. The way is very pleasant along roads formed by human labour through the mountains. In the course of our journey we found well built villages resembling towns, and observed almost at every step little hills planted with olives and vines, orchards and gardens, in the embellishment of which, nature seems to have vied with art.

Marseilles forms an amphitheatre round a port cut out in the solid rock by the hand of nature. It is of an oval figure; and there are commonly three or four hundred vessels in it, which import productions from every part of the world. The quay is spacious, and is paved with large pebbles.

The ships which come from the Levant perform quarantine in a small island some distance from the port. After remaining there thirty days, they unload their cargoes, which are conveyed to warehouses situated without the town: they then enter the port, where they remain ten days; and it is not till after twenty days more that their merchandise is allowed to be introduced into the city. Marseilles cannot take

too

too many precautions against a calamity, to which it has so often been a victim.

It is well known that the Phœnicians built this town, formerly celebrated for its marble and buildings. At the present day some magnificence is conspicuous in the *Ville Neuve* and the *Quartier Neuf*; the streets are wide, regular, and well paved, and the buildings are in a pretty good style of architecture. 'The *Cours*, which is here the most frequented promenade, is nothing but a long and wide street ornamented with two rows of trees, and has nothing remarkable in it but the great number of people who constantly resort to it.

The objects most worthy of notice here, are the sugar refineries, the manufactories of stuffs, gold, silk, soap, &c.

There is here an academy of belles lettres, and a periodical concert, to which foreigners are admitted gratis.

This is the country for good liqueurs, perfumes, essences, syrups, and sweetmeats.

L E T T E R LII.

Leghorn, September 14, 1789.

WE are now in one of the richest ports of the Mediterranean. There are here several English, Greek, and Armenian commercial houses. As to the Jews, they are so much respected in this place, that the proverb says, *You had better strike the grand duke than a Jew*. This is a free port; and that, without doubt, is the reason why commerce flourishes. The Genoese must have often repented that they gave up this town to Cosmo I. for I know not what insignificant village.

The streets are wide, and well paved; and the police so strict, that a man may safely walk through them at midnight with his hands full of gold. There are here fine buildings; and the *via grande* is ornamented with large and rich shops.

The statue of Cosmo I. which is in the arsenal, does not deserve much notice; but this is not the case with the four Barbarians in bronze, chained at his feet. This position is natural; their countenances are so strongly expressive of grief and despair, that they appear to be really animated. In

a corner

a corner at a little distance from this statue, are two superb basons of granite.

The inhabitants of this place being all engaged in commerce, the sciences are neglected, and no other arts are cultivated than those which relate to navigation.

All the booksellers are printers; *Masi*, who has made a choice collection of the Italian poets, has a superb printing-house. He is at present engaged in making a beautiful and correct edition of Boccace; and he proposes afterwards to print all the authors who have written in the same style. He publishes a translation of several journals of the national assembly. The avidity with which these are bought up, announces a revolution, which may possibly not prove favourable to the interests of the grand duke.

This fertile country is not yet freed from superstition, of which I shall give you two striking examples. Every bookseller to whom I have applied, refused to sell me, at any price, a translation of Lucretius, by the celebrated Marchetti, telling me that it was forbidden by the pope. An able artist called *Lapi*, having engraved a Venus of Titian, thought it too licentious; and that the only way to expiate so great a crime was to destroy his plate, which he did not hesitate to do.

Here, as throughout all Tuscany, the ladies wear white; for, according to their mode of thinking, lively colours are fit only for peasants. Some of them, I am told, in order to make this favourite colour more natural to them, frequently
bleed

bleed themselves, which occasions them to look very white and pale; and they are then the more admired.

A husband here never attends his wife to church, the theatre, or other public places, for he would be pointed at if he did.

The country girls are pretty enough; and their small straw hats inclining a little to one side, give them a grace and an air of coquetry which correspond admirably with their picturesque drefs. It is surprising not to see any courtesans in so populous and commercial a country. I am ignorant of the motives which can influence the government to establish a police so destructive to the tranquillity of mothers and husbands.

The population of this town may amount to fifty thousand souls, including fifteen thousand Jews.

LETTER LIII.

Sardinia, October 7, 1789.

AFTER coasting round *Gorgona*, *Elba*, and *Corfica*, we came to an anchor on the north of this island, in the gulf of *Alrachena*. Whilst the boats were hoisting out, we heard the firing of musketry. This proceeded from the inhabitants, who, posted in bodies upon different hills, were firing at our vessel. We landed in order to know the reason of this proceeding, and I was appointed interpreter on the occasion, though, to confess the truth, I could have wished myself rid of the office. Seven or eight people, with arms in their hands, advanced towards us with a precipitate step. One of them, who was on horseback, asked to what country our ship belonged? I replied, that it was English. He then looked with an air of surprise at his companions, who asked in their turn, if the English were Christians? We replied in the affirmative, and invited them on board to dinner; but it was not till after long deliberation that they accepted our offer. We then asked them, why they fired upon us? "To make you come ashore, in order that we might know to what country your vessel

vessel belonged." "Why are you all armed?" "To prevent foreigners from landing against our will; and to defend our wives, our children, and flocks."

We landed in search of game; and though they told us that there were partridges, hares, deer, and wild boars, we found none of any kind. We went through some wretched villages, whose inhabitants seemed as frightful, and as well armed as those who came on board of us.

The air of this place is very unwholesome, on which account the people in general are wan. They suffer their beards to grow, wear a red cap, and are clothed in a black felt doublet covered with a sort of cuirass of stag's hide, which laces over the breast, and reaches below the knee. Their breeches and boots are of the same materials; and a belt, from which hangs a long stiletto, is fastened round their body.

Their mode of living is quite unrestrained. They apply to no sort of labour, not even to agriculture, and live wholly upon milk and game. They agree very ill together, and their quarrels almost always have a tragical end. The murderer escapes by quitting his little town and joining the banditti, with whom he remains till he can obtain his pardon from the relations of the deceased. These people recognise so slightly the rights of the king, that they often make war upon his officers, who in their turn massacre them, or seize their flocks, and burn their habitations.

A contrary wind obliged us to coast round this island, and
to

to anchor in various bays. In the small island of *Magdalena* we met with several Neapolitan barks fishing for coral. At *Tolara*, a high rock, which loses itself in the clouds, and which the ancients called *Insula Mercurii*, we killed some wild goats, and took in fresh water. We were informed that the people of Barbary resort hither for the same purpose.

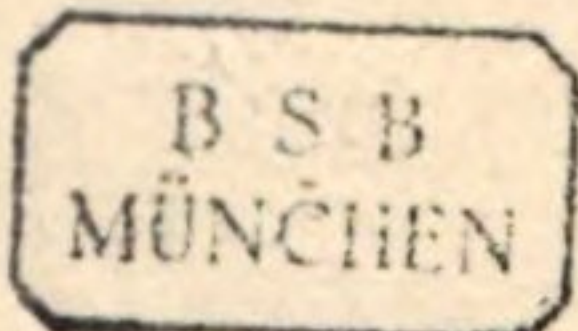
At *Oleastro* the air is equally unhealthy; but the inhabitants are not so savage nor so miserable; for they attend to cultivation. At *Oriſtan* the inhabitants are humane, complaisant to foreigners, and live very comfortably. We found there poultry, excellent millers, and very good bread. On the borders of the sea, are the ruins of an ancient town. A soldier made us a present of a Carthaginian medal, which he had found in these ruins.

I hardly need inform you that the marshes, with which this country abounds, have always infected the air. Pausanias ascribes the bad air to the salt of these marshes, and to an impetuous south wind which prevails in the country.

The ancients make mention of an herb peculiar to this island, which occasions death by laughter; from whence it is called the *Sardonic laugh*, an expression so ancient, that it is even to be met with in Homer. This herb grew in the neighbourhood of springs, without however infecting the water.

We are about to depart for England, whence you will hear from me. Adieu!

F I N I S.



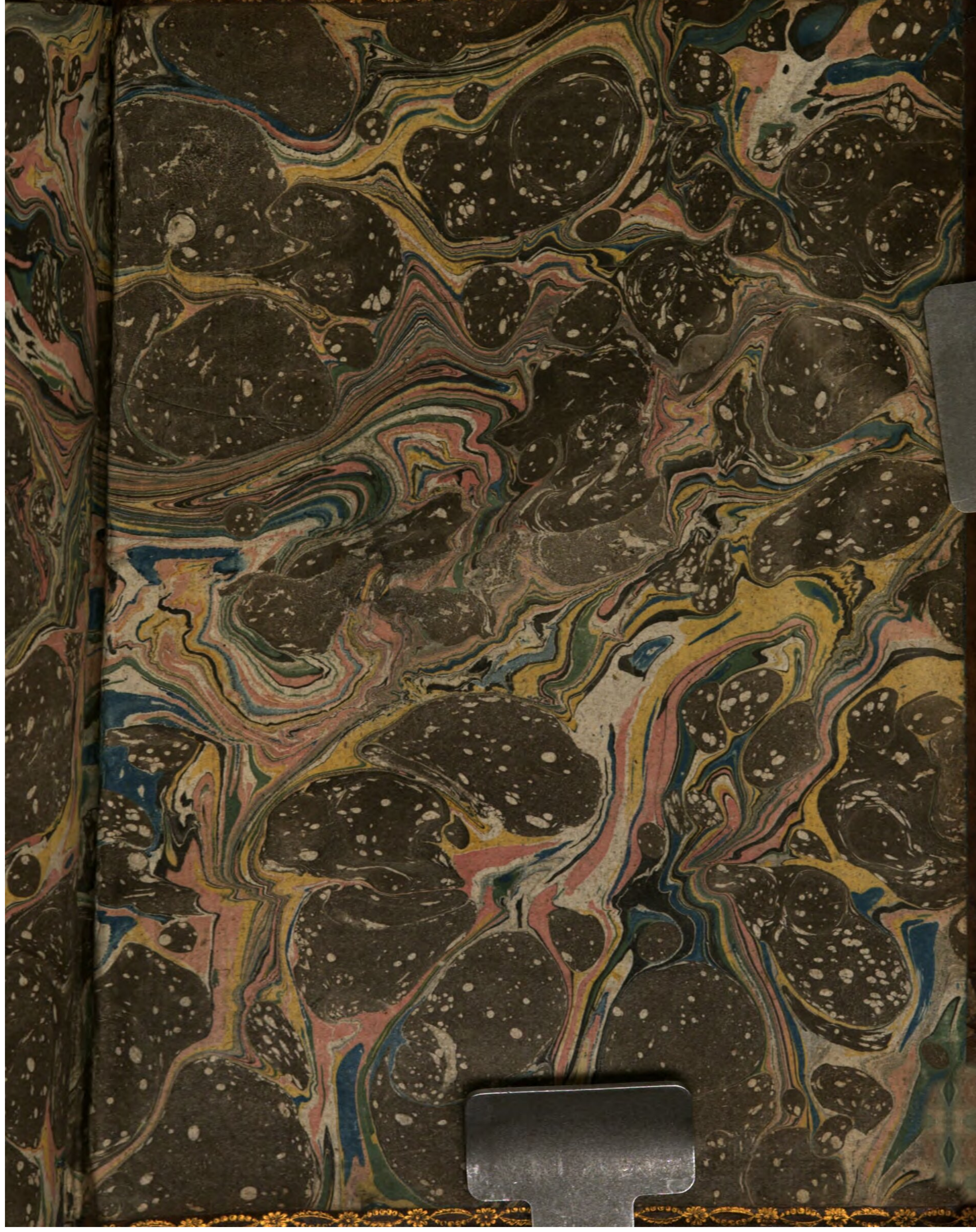




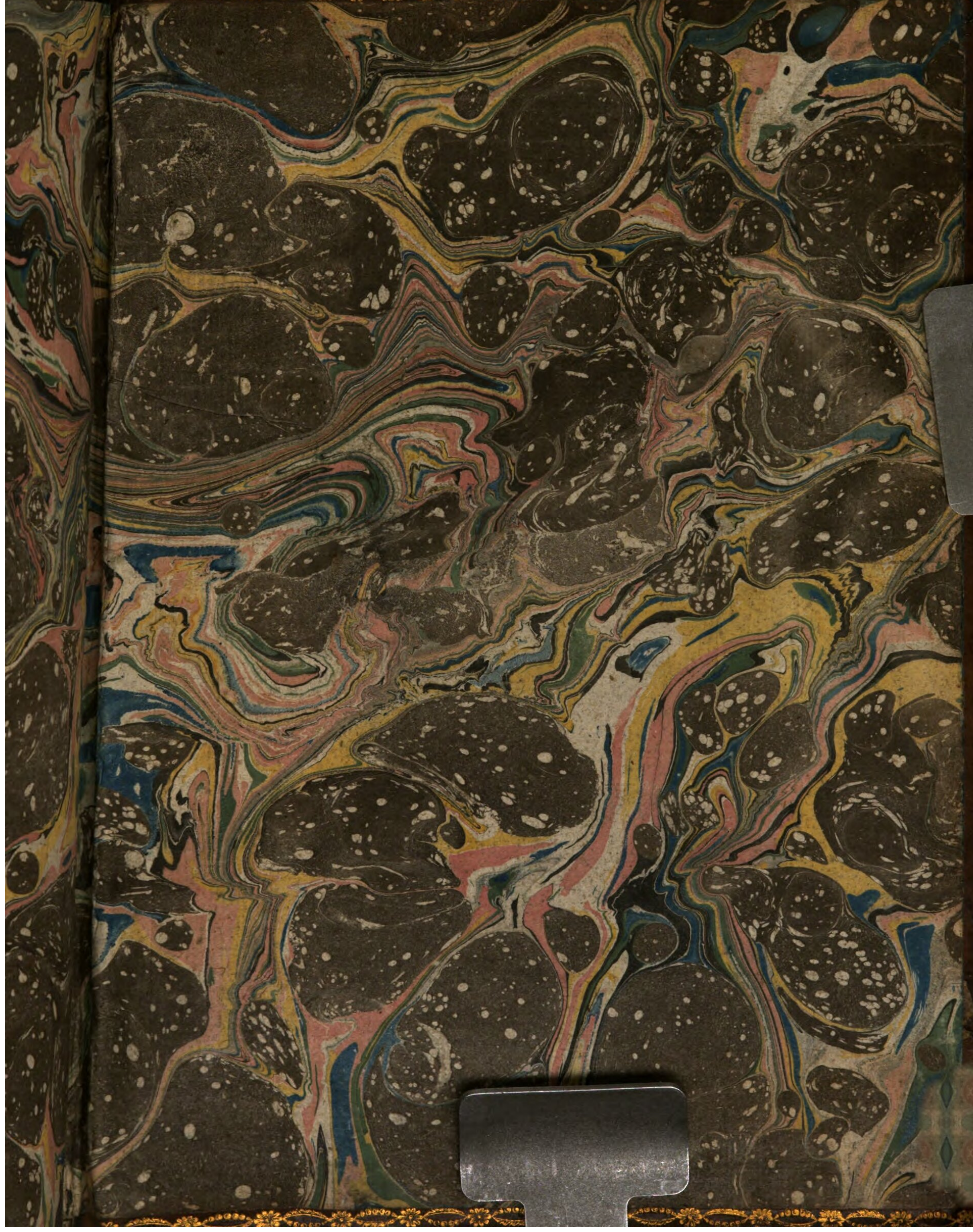














Bisani, Alessandro

A Picturesque Tour Through Part Of Europe, Asia, and Africa Containing
Many New Remarks On The Present State Of Society, Remains Of Ancient
Edifices, &c

London 1793

4 lt.sing. 262 m

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10366762-1